"THE ALIBI OF MAJOR LE CLARE" COMMENCES NEXT WEEK. READ IT

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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THE SWORD OF MERCY.

BY EDGAR WHITE.

"Fake, eh?"

"Sure. He wants a free ride to Missouri. Then he will tell us he's only funnin'."

"Calls himself 'Captain of the S. A.' What do you reckon that is?"

"Saints' Association, I 'magine. From the way he writes I judge he thinks he's one of 'em. Contrariwise, it might stand for Sinners' Association just as well."

Two small, gray-eyed men were seated at a table in the sheriff's office, scrutinizing the paper that lay between them. The first speaker wore a heavy fur cap, and was smooth shaven. This was Dan Hall, deputy sheriff. The other man had on a large felt hat, of the kind affected by the early-day Missourian. Like the deputy, he was attired in a dark gray suit. Both of the men were woolen shirts and tall boots outside their pants. The man wearing the pioneer slouch hat was Newt Graves, country storekeeper and postmaster of Woodville, just elected sheriff of Macon County, after having made ten unsuccessful attempts to secure the office. The result of his persistence came to him as his hair and mustache were beginning to whiten, and it was appreciated perhaps with all the more fervor because of its tardiness.

The case under discussion was the first noteworthy happening on the criminal calendar during the brief administration of Sheriff Graves; and the two officers were up in the air for a starting point. The old officers were in town, but Graves and his deputy didn't care about announcing their perplexity to them until they had made a stagger at the problem themselves.

The puzzle was this: A man signing himself "Charles Hirrlinger, Captain S. A., Golden City, Colorado," had written a purported confession to the commission of a highway robbery in the county during the summer of 1877.

"I met the man I held up near the old Charlton Block house," wrote Hirrlinger, "and the moment I pulled my gun on him his hands went up in the air like a piece of machinery that had broken loose. The haul amounted to $400, which, I am ashamed to say, I spent in sinful living. A few years later, while on the Pacific Coast, I became converted, and, through God's kindly help, have discarded all my evil ways forever.

"As the days went by this crime committed in your county stood between me and the light of Heaven. It grew larger and larger. I could not sleep. I decided there was only one thing to do and I am going to do it. I can't return the money, for it's all gone, but I can take my sentence and face my fate in the penitentiary like a man, thank God! That's what I am offering to do in this letter.

"I have not the means to come to Missouri, but if you want me and will send a man here I will return with him without a requisition. Please let me hear from you and also notify the man I robbed, if he is still in your county. I cannot describe his features, as it was in the night-time when we met, but he was over six feet high and built in proportion. Yours in the hope of eternal glory," etc.

"Sounds like a preacher," remarked the deputy.

"Dan," said the sheriff, "big Jake Grafford was the man he robbed!"

"Well?"

"Let's call him up and see what he thinks about it."

This was done, and the result of the telephone interview was Big Jake's excited appearance in the sheriff's office next day. He slowly picked his way through the long screed; then turned to Graves.

"Goin' after him?"

"I was just thinkin'," said the sheriff, looking up at the cobwebs in the corner.

"Thinkin'!" Ain't it your business to go an' get 'im?"

"S'posin' it's a put-up job?"

"Then what?" asked Grafford.

"Why, just be out what the trip cost," replied the sheriff.

Grafford thought a few minutes, then—"Say, Newt," he said, "what's the matter with lettin' me go in your stead?"

"And you foot the bill if you lose?"

"Sure. I'd give a good deal more than that to put that fellow where he belongs. I've needed that $400 a dozen times since that fellow stole it, and it would do me a world of good to snap the handcuffs on him. I believe it's our man."

"Hope so, but it's the queerest deal I ever heard of. It strikes me that when you find your man, if you ever do, that it'll turn out to be some lunatic. But if you want to go, I'll commission you as my deputy and get Squire Greer to issue a warrant. We don't need to bother about requisition papers 'cause he says he'll come without 'em." The sheriff gave Big Jake a revolver and some cartridges and told him to be careful to not get held up again.

Big Jake landed in Golden City about seven in the evening. His stage coach trip from the junction over a rocky way of twenty-one miles had not helped his temper. He went to the old tavern in the place and got supper. Then he strolled out on the picturesque, kerosene-lighted street. Down at the corner was a commotion of some sort and Jake stopped to listen.

"There is sunshine, there is sunshine,
Where the peaceful, happy moments roll;
Where Jesus shows his smiling face—
There is sunshine in my soul!"

Ah! There was a touch of home. The red cape, the big bonnets, the drum—all were there just the same as back in Missouri. The big deputy went down to the crowd.

"Now, we will bow a few moments in prayer with Captain Hirrlinger."

Grafford started at the leader's mention of the name. He saw a tall, regularly-featured man remove his cap and kneel by the big drum.

"Hypocrite!" muttered the officer.

The rough men outside the Army took off their sombreros and folded their arms. Captain Hirrlinger poured forth his supplication in earnest tones. The women of the Army put the "amens!" in at encouraging intervals. Grafford was not a religious man, but the captain's effort struck him as blasphemy. He was not an unbiased judge. The wound in the pocketbook had not yet healed. The wound to his feelings never would heal, he thought.

"Save us and bless us and make us useful servants in Thy great cause, for Jesus' sake—amen!"

Then the drums and tambourines began, and prayer and quiet took to the woods. Grafford slipped around behind the captain and touched him lightly on the shoulder. Hirrlinger understood.

"Bryce having a splendid meeting tonight," he whispered. "Some souls may be saved. Can't you wait till it's over?"

"Yes, but I'll keep my eyes on you, brother," said the deputy.

It was his first official job, and his feathers stuck up.

While one of the soldiers was testifying, Hirrlinger whispered to a bonneted member of the corps, who visibly trembled. He laid his hand on her arm.

"Be brave, little woman!"

There was nothing in the Army's actions that night to indicate the shadow. Yet they all knew it. A big crowd followed them up into the hall. Grafford took a seat in front. Several penitents went forward, and Hirrlinger knelt with them. So did the woman to whom he had whispered, and others. After it was all over the captain went to the deputy.

"When do we start back?" he asked.

"At once."

"I'll be ready."

"Will you?" said Grafford, sarcastically. "That's good of you."

For an instant a steel ray of threatening trouble shot from the eyes of the man under the red cap. Then it died out.

"Brother," he said, "there is no use of us quarreling. I sent for you and I presume you have a warrant—"

"You bet!"

"And I'm going to waive requisition. You sent your time and I'll be ready to go with you. Until then my time belongs to me."

The Salvation Army man spoke calmly enough, but there was a decision in his voice that made Big Jake stare. He fumbled for something in his pockets which clinked.

"What's to hinder me from puttin' the bracelets on you right now?"

Captain Hirrlinger stepped back and with an instinct born in perilous times placed his hand to his hip-pocket.

"You try it!"

Big Jake thought of his own pistol, but somehow it didn't look practical to use it. By intuition he realized that the man before him was his master in rapidity of action, and he had been the best and safest thing to do was to let him plan his own way of surrendering.

"You needn't shoot," he said. "I'll see you in the mornin'."

The peculiar, set look on the captain's face faded and a most gentle expression took its place.

"Forgive me, my friend," he said humbly, as he extended his hand. "I have no right to shoot you with; it was merely an old habit of mine that I acquired in the old days. You will find me ready to go back with you in the morning. And now, goodnight, and you have my word."

Big Jake returned to the tavern and went to bed contentedly. He was not free of uneasiness about the escape of his prisoner, though he had figured out an entirely different program as he came over. His intention was to arrest Hirrlinger the minute he became sober and keep him in the town lock-up until morning, and then bring him back in irons. It had never occurred to him that a man who had been a highwayman could have any sensitiveness about appearing in public with his hands shackled. Big Jake wasn't a mean man, but he felt that he ought to be allowed to have some of the job, and he entertained something of a grudge against the Hirrlinger family on that score as he revolved it in his mind.

Next morning, when he entered the tavern office, he found a female lieutenant of the tambourine army waiting to escort him to Captain Hirrlinger's home. The people engaged two horses to ride over to the function, preferring that method to the trouble of walking to a lumbering stage coach. Hirrlinger's estate nestled in a little valley back of the town. It was neatly painted and the grounds were attractive with carefully-cultivated lawns, flowers and shrubs. When Big Jake and his guide reached the gate Captain Hirrlinger and the woman he had whispered to the night before appeared in the door. His left arm was around her and they walked slowly down to the gate. The prisoner, with head bent low, was whispering words to her all the way. At the gate the captain kissed her and gracefully assisted the latter of a man, whom she described as an angel, an incarnate emblem of charity, a model Christian gentleman of the purest composition, a nobleman of earth.

Big Jake, with his vociferous cob-pipe, thickened the atmosphere in the sheriff's manner. He blushed and looked back at April assistance.

"Hain't he!" said Dan, the deputy. "Where's Deadwood Dick?"

"Nothin' doin' out thar," said Jake; "all a fake."

The sheriff glanced at Dan and looked happy over the companionship of his dubious associates in his first official problem.

"Next time maybe you fellers 'll pay more 'tention to what I'm sayin'," he remarked.

Odd Happenings.

While playing in the grounds of a Dutch church at Roosendaal, South Africa, two Boer children made an interesting discovery. With small spades they were digging a hole, and just below the surface several gold coins were unearthed. They continued to dig, gradually adding to their precious store. The youngsters soon had a pile of English gold sovereigns. The next ten joined the search and it was not long before a treasure to the value of nearly $5,000 in gold and silver coins was brought to light. During the war the church was used as a hospital and for housing refugees, and it is surmised that the treasure must have been buried by some one who is now dead.

Guests in a well-known hotel in Paris heard pitiful cries for help coming from the next room at 7 o'clock in the morning, and the waiters and manager rushed downstairs. The door was locked, but they entered it down, and discovered a very fat burglar held up by the upholstery, through which he had tried to escape. The brickwork had to be knocked down before he could be extricated, and the police he was a Belgian, but "I cannot divulge my name," he said. Writing Leopold must be extremely angry with me if he knew what I had been doing."

In order to secure some token by which to identify a corpse found to whom she had been much attached, Mdlle. Bertha Chevalier, a young Parisian actress, cheated a sale of the old lady's effects. The girl bought a number of the articles were beyond her purse. A shabby old book—a book of devotions—was, however, put up. Nobody bid for it except Mdlle. Chevalier, and she bought it for next to nothing. In turning over the leaves she discovered a folded paper. It was a will bequeathing the bulk of her great aunt's estate, valued at $90,000.

Items of Interest.

The occupants of the Philippines represent each a variety of races that thirty-one languages are spoken there.

Deafness is more common in cold countries than in warm climates, the ear being very susceptible to atmospheric changes.

A street in Ninove, Belgium, has been named Esperanto street in honor of Esperantists, Norway, Paris and Geneva also have Esperanto streets.

The penalty for selling oleomargarine as butter is severe in Philadelphia. He who does it must pay a fine of $100 in jail, and pay a fine of two hundred and fifty dollars.

A Lyons manufacturer has invented a cask that he could not pay because so many customers of the brewer were charging him only sixpenny fees that he was unable to make a living.

Denmark has an average of one cow for every two inhabitants, and is noted for the excellence of its dairy products. Butter is a ready market in various countries of Europe.

The best breed of hogs in France is the Craonnais, which often attains the weight of 60 pounds when but eighteen months old. A prize pig weighed 783 pounds at the age of 3 years and 4 months.

Selawik is a curious lake near the seacoast of Alaska. It rises and falls in the lake by reason of an underground connection with the sea. At the bottom the water is quite salty, but at the top it is layer of perfectly fresh water.

A gold pipe, valuable pipe and five pounds of his own smoking mixture was left Kaiser Wilhelm by one of his own subjects who recently celebrated his one hundred and fourth birthday. The man has been an inveterate smoker all his life.

Automatic billiard tables are in use in Germany, and are a knock upon other players, besides saving the expense of attendants. When a small coin is dropped into a slot, the balls are produced automatically, and at the end of fifteen minutes they disappear from the table.

Colorado Makes Good.

The plodding farmer may be slow, but in the end he, like all with other lines of industry that seem to hold out brighter promises he always seems to come out on the right side of the ledger in his race with the hare. The latest illustration of this comes from Colorado, a state which only a few years ago was dazzling the world with the riches in its gold and silver mines.

The annual reviews of Colorado's progress show that in 1905 the State produced the greatest amount of gold ever mined in its history, a total of $29,000,000. But in the same year the wheat and potatoes, hay and other produce from Colorado farms aggregated more than $40,000,000 in value. Silver was richer in value than for several years, and the production of this metal in Colorado rose to 40,000,000, but the combined product of the orchards and sugar beet factories beat the total of silver by $1,500,000. Five million dollars' worth of lead was marketed, which is just about equal to the value of the coal mine shipped. The whole value of the product of the metalliferous mines of the State was $75,000,000. The products of the farms aggregated more than $100,000,000.

More money is being invested in agricultural projects in Colorado than in the development of mines. Reservoirs and canals originally planned for placer mining have been diverted to farm irrigation, and the next few years seem likely to see the area of highly productive farming lands in the State more than doubled. The "man with the hoe" seems to have secured a start over the man with the hammer and drill, which the latter will never be able to overcome, unless some very remarkable new discoveries of mines are made.

Four pounds of fresh leaves are necessary to make one pound of dried tea.

BUTTERMILK

A Surer Way Out.

The "buttermilk fad," which its followers insisted was the cure for all the ills that human flesh is heir to, has pretty well had its day.

Buttermilk is a pleasant and healthy drink, but it has not a whole lot of desirable things that it cannot do. A Nebr. woman found something much more worth while. She says:

"Three years ago my stomach was in such a frightful condition that I could scarcely bear to take any food at all. Indeed there was once that I went for 14 days without a morsel of nourishment, preferring starvation to the acute agony that I suffered when I ate anything. And all this entailed upon me almost constant headaches and nervousness. My condition was truly pitiable.

"The doctor warned me that the coffee I drank was chiefly responsible for this condition, and ordered me to drink buttermilk instead. But I despised buttermilk, and could not bring myself to use it.

"Then I was advised to try Postum Food Coffee. It has completely renovated and made over my whole system. The sanitary effect on my poor stomach was simply marvelous, and that straightened out, the headaches, nervousness and other troubles soon vanished. For more than a year I have not felt a moment's pain or pain, such as once thought would kill me.

"I can truthfully say that Postum has brought me the blessing of the perfect health I enjoy, for I gave up medicines when I began to use the Postum diet by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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A Happy Denouement.

"You should write a story and happify," suggested the publisher.

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Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Hintsville, Pa.

The Definition of the Rejected.

She—And so you think I'm a coquette? Why, I don't believe you know what a coquette is!

He (bitterly)—A coquette is a woman who syndicates her affections.—Life.

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THE RED COUNTESS;

or, The Czar's Spy.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

Author of "The White Hands," "Robespierre," "The Judas Legacy," Etc.

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CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

After twitting him about his reserve she broke out suddenly by asking him if he had attended the Countess Luzia's fancy functions the previous night.

"Yes, I had the pleasure of meeting that wonderful woman," said Spence. "Her beauty is remarkable and her address perfect. No wonder she has St. Petersburg at her feet."

Olga asked who were there and Spence enumerated the guests as far as he could remember. There were so many handsome dames, such a host of princes, colonels and other high-born personages that the list seemed endless. At least it was wearying to Spence.

Olga listened in silence.

"Yes," she said at last, "the Red Countess is beautiful, but hers is the beauty of the tigress. One overlooks her sins while in her presence and gets the many who have traveled the road to Siberia because she served the Czar."

Spence turned upon the fair girl at these words and looked at her a moment in astonished silence.

"Because she serves the Czar?" he echoed.

"Yes. The Countess Demidoff is the favorite spy of His Imperial Majesty."

Light like a flash of morn broke in upon Spence's soul.

"I had never heard this intimated before," said he. "I am aware, however, that no one knows who are in the Czar's pay. We are constantly under surveillance and it is said many have been secretly slated and the wife against her husband."

"That is more than true."

"But the Countess? She has at her command all the wealth that a human being could wish. She is the first countess in the realm, has a summer palace, I believe, and her establishment in St. Petersburg is a scene of enchantment."

"But who pays for it all?" cried Olga, with a peculiar curling of her finely chiseled lips. "Much of her wealth has come from the treasury of the Czar and is drawn it in turn from the peasantry, and her rubies represent the groans and sighs of those lands."

"Then why have not the malcontents turned upon her?" he asked.

"They want the master first," responded the girl. "They want to reach the source of the contamination. Strike the Czar down and the Russian wolves lose their place. She will then fall to her natural level and pass out of notice. It is the Czar who created murderer first."

Spence threw back his head and for a moment peered into the hate and beautiful face of Olga Galitzin.

"If I thought—" he said, and paused as if he was on forbidden ground.

"You will not shrink from any ordeal imposed by the great order!" broke in Olga.

He caught her in his arms and drew her close, her yielding form resting warm against his wildly beating heart, and for a full minute he studied the face at close, impassioned scrutiny of a lover.

"You do not know, dear?" cried he. "No, you cannot have heard. We keep our secrets so well."

"It has been decided, then? The die has been cast? I am proud of Russia!"

Spence released her and she fell back, leaning for support on the table, illumined by a light which he had never noticed before.

"The die has been cast!" said he, lowering his voice.

"And Nicholas is to die?"

"Yes."

She did not speak for several minutes. The lights in the room wavered before the American's eyes. He felt his heart stand still for a spell and then assail the bars of his bosom and like a bird in an iron cage.

"Olga!" he cried again, catching her to his bosom. "Child! we quit this terrorized land!"

Like a flash the truth seemed to dawn upon her. She appeared to realize the full meaning of his question.

Turning her head about his neck, she breathed heavily for a moment and then, drawing back till she could look him in the face, she exclaimed:

"I fell to your lot, did it not? You are to become a member of millions?"

As for Spence, he threw her from him and sprang to his feet.

"Yes, love, devotion has made me an assassin!" he shouted.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST KISS—PERHAPS.

The next ten minutes Spence talked without interruption.

He had told the woman he loved all about the drawing of the dread lots of death.

He went from one to the other, unfortunate to her and saw her face whiten as if the finger of the angel of death had touched it. With that whiteness she had never appeared so dazzlingly beautiful to him. He pictured her in the Red Countess, and Olga did not suffer by the comparison. If she was a fiend in human shape, while Luzia Demidoff, the jilted spy of the Czar, could boast of many loves, and at least one lover amid the cruel snows of Siberia.

Spence did not blame Olga for his first love affair. He had united in the order of the Black Thirty at her instigation, but he would not censure her. She had the good of Russia at heart as she innocently thought, and, being the daughter of one in the Czar's service, she went on and on, plunging deeper and deeper into Nihilism until she hated with all her heart the man who was the hunted ruler of the greatest empire in the world.

"I shall carry out my commission," said Spence, through half-wedded lips. "Together we shall accomplish the dread work."

She did not answer him.

There is no escape for me. The laws of the Black Thirty say that the person who refuses to carry out his mission shall die. I have nothing against Nicholas. I have no wish to make the Czarina a widow nor to bring sorrow to the little ones in the palace, but—

She was standing before him like a queen.

"What if some one forestalls you?" she suddenly cried. "What if another's hand carries out the decree of the Thirty?"

"Impossible!" he said, paling.

"If another hand than yours reached the Czar first, if another's dagger or bomb found him before the expiration of the appointed time—"

"No! no!" broke in Spence, springing to his feet and seizing the girl's wrist. "You do not know what you suggest. I recall your inmost thoughts, girl. You must not, you!"

In her efforts to break from his grasp she pulled him half way across the room.

"There is a way out, if all," she said, looking him in the face with the air of a woman who had thought it out. "There is a way though it leads across the snowy steppes of Siberia. We can go thither together."

"You are mad, mad!" exclaimed Spence. "Olga, you must not for a moment think of such things."

"Do you know that you belong to the Thirty?" asked the girl.

"I cannot say, but I am she is the Czar's spy—"

"Aye, she knows!" put in the girl. "This watch is spies and intrigue knows it all. Her appearance at the door of the refresh-ment room last night tells me that the Sergius Orloff is her slave."

"I am not," said she. "That I first met the Red Countess," said Spence.

"See the plot—to get you to her palace, to woo you with the Czar's toast, and she was there with her keen eyes to watch you like a hawk."

A light seemed to break in upon the young American.

"Leave it to me," cried Olga. "Let me take care of this witch of St. Petersburg."

"No, girl—"

"It shall be woman against woman! When did you say the time of the dread decree expires?"

"Five days, counting from the taking of the death ballot."

Olga thought a moment.

"I will not forget," said she. "I will keep in mind the time and the deed."

"But—"

"You would say that I will get into trouble," said the girl. "I am Nihilist. I believe in the bomb for the tyrant. Freedom for oppressed Russia is the dream of my life."

"But you must not get yourself into danger. I will not have it. Better my poor life than your pure one."

She walked across the room to a little case set in the wall and having glass doors. Opening one of these she drew out a dagger which she suddenly held up in the light.

Spence's face whitened at sight of the blade.

"Your father—"

"He is not of my opinions," she broke in. "What a scandal it would raise if Mr. Petersburg knew that the daughter of Galitzin of the Paviouki Guards was a Nihilist! no Czar has the spies as have we. Nicholas surrounds himself with the Third Section and the uniformed minions, but he does not know that even among them are the members of our band. How think you these gleamings reach the Czar even in the Winter Palace? They are found on his tables, in his private chambers and under the plates at his table. He finds them under his pillow at night and almost between the lips of the woman he loves."

"I know that the enemies of the Czar are all-powerful," said Spence.

"The dagger can free Russia as well as the bomb," Olga went on. "It has freed kingdoms before this."

"But on your hand!" and in the thrill of the moment the American darted forward, caught the girl and wrested the steel from it. "I am the ordained executioner. Mine is the right figure and it is my sworn duty—"

At that moment the door opened and there appeared before them an old female servant whose face was a strange admixture of fright and resentment.

Olga whirled upon Paslova with a start.

"What is the matter, woman?" she cried.

"Have you not heard?" cried the old woman who had been brought up in Olga's house and whose whole life was devoted to her. It happened but an hour ago."

"What has happened?" cried the lovers at the same moment.

"A death duel! Prassovitch, the chief of the Third Section. He was shot on the Nevsky Prospect."

Olga sank back and threw up her hands.

"Thank Heaven!" she cried. "One of the hated vermin out of the road. Now for—"

What it was to be she checked the sentence and the girl did not finish.

"There will be another Prassovitch," calmly said old Paslova. "Just as there will be another Czar if they reach Nicholas. God save the Czar!"

Guy and Olga exchanged quick glances.

In another moment the old servant had vanished and Spence drew the young girl toward the door as he adjusted his cloak.

"I will return to-morrow," said he, looking up into her lover's face. "Until now I have never feared to meet foe or against the Czar. It is all plain to me and I doubt not that we have had an eavesdropper."

"I will warn you—"

"Yes, I know it now. Paslova is a spy of the Countess Demidoff. The life of Olga Galitzin came together and, putting up her face for parting kisses, she endured it to its full and a minute later the young American stood beyond the house.

Just then as if from still pursued him, a sledge dashed past and on the rear seat Spence fancied he caught a flash of red and started. It was Luzia Demidoff, driving like a demon in the winter wind.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RED COUNTESS ISSUES ORDERS.

The Countess Demidoff stood in the largest chamber in her palace with the light of a fire upon her face.

She was quite alone.

As if she waited for some one she watched a door until it at last opened and a man came in.

At sight of her he started and then made a low obeisance, afterward approaching and kissing the hand she haughtily held out for that purpose.

"And how goes it, my Colonel?"

The officer was in full uniform and a handsome man of fifty, straightened and with a commanding face before which, at the "The whole city is still excited over the murder of the Chief of Police. I recall how guards have been called out to one of the districts to suppress a mob."

"Yes, your excellency, there!"

"They have given us a little trouble, but I trust that the assistance will make short work of them."

"Of course," replied the Red Countess. "They always do that. We must cut down these people if we would save the Czar."

An expression of doubt came for moment to the officer's face.

Colonel Browski was one of the many lovers of the Red Countess, and it was said that he had been accepted from among them all.

Therefore he had free access to the Demidoff palace at all hours and came and went when he pleased.

He seemed to draw her figure to its splendid height after the officer's last words and his eyes glowed with admiration upon him the full light of her moaning eyes.

"I am told," said she, "that the Black Thirty have doomed Ilia Mastyr."

At this a disdainful laugh parted the soldier's lips and he shook his head decidedly.

"The Black Thirty is powerless," said Browski. "We have our spies within its inner circle and if the Order has done anything that threatens the Czar's life it is known to his closest friends by this time."

"So, girl," said the Czar, Paul," cried the Countess. "Who knew of the attempt on the life of Prassovitch?"

"No one, in fact, though we all know that he was a marked man."

"But on my friend. So is the Czar."

"But he is in the Winter Palace!" cried the officer. "The hand of the Black Thirty cannot reach him there."

He reads its warnings almost every day. They reach him in the Palace—"

"Then some servant is bribed."

"If some member of the Order is not in the Czar's service," said the Red Countess, with a smile.

For a moment silence fell between the pair and then the hand of the Red Countess fell lightly but with significance upon Browski's arm.

"You stand willing at any time to obey me, do you not, Paul?" she asked.

"Colonel Browski is your devoted slave."

"Good! Then let me put your words to the test."

Browski straightened up to his six feet three and waited for his companion to proceed.

"There is in the city a young artist named Spence."

"The American on the Nevsky Prospect?"

"The same. The young man is in danger."

"What is that to my friend, the Countess Demidoff?"

"Never mind that, my Paul. Let me have a few secrets."

"Proceed."

"In truth this young man has been drawn into the ranks of the Black Thirty."

"The American!" cried the officer, with a sudden start. "It is a dark day for him."

"He has listened to the whisperings of disloyalty. He is in the net of doom unless he can be extricated."

"Why not let the American fool pay for his folly?" cried Browski, with some passion. "He should not take the part of those interfering with the business in which my talents are. If he is against the Czar, Sheva is against me. He is my enemy."

The face of the Czar's spy grew white.

"Then, my Paul, you are willing to obey me," said Luzia.

"You have not put me to the test yet."

"Listen, then. The only has Guy Spence, the American, been initiated into the mysteries of the Black Thirty, but he has drawn the lot of death. In other words, he is the executioner appointed to take the life of the Czar."

"A fool and his folly, as I have said," broke out the Colonel. "If you are going to interfere to save the life of every foreigner who—"

"Silence! The American does not know that his secret is mine. I had a spy within the circle of the Thirty for weeks. Everything this Order does is reported to me, and I let the Czar know all that I learn. The young American must not make the attempt."

"Ha! you want to sit for him, do you? He has made an impression on your heart."

"I have no engagement with him," said Luzia, with a certain sternness which did not escape the soldier. "I tell you all I should not solicit your help. You must come between Spence and the bosom of the Emperor."

"I get grace?"

"You, Paul Browski of the Guards!"

"And if I fail—"

"Then forfeit your head!"

The semblance of a laugh appeared in the eye of Colonel Browski, but it was again checked by the look he received from the Red Countess.

"Within four days the Czar is to perish at the hands of the American," she went on. "Spence must not be made a martyr. His Imperial Majesty may be. And, having learned this, the will of the Black Thirty is to be executed."

Bomb or dagger?"

"That rests with the chosen assassin. He may elect to stab Nicholas or may have recourse to the bomb. Colonel, as my Colonel, you will prevent this deed."

"By arresting the American and turning him over to the police?"

"The police are not to lay hands on him. You will summon him and escort him secretly to this palace."

Colonel Browski started visibly.

"To this palace?" he echoed. "Do you intend to harbor the assassin?" he demanded, with feeling.

"My secrets are my own," imperiously exclaimed the beautiful creature. "You will carry out my commands."

At that she drew back, resting one of her jeweled hands on a marble mantel, looking the man who was to be her tool which told him that the conversation was over.

But Browski did not stir.

He changed color twice in as many seconds, first as the Countess spoke of the fact and the stamping of the Countess' little foot on the floor called him from his abstraction.

"Oh!" cried Luzia. "The Czar is in the shadow of death. You will be the executioner of my will. You shall save the life of His Imperial Majesty."

"And my reward?"

"We will speak of that afterward," was the answer. "Bring the American to me secretly and keep the secret of my power." Browski bowed, doubt for the moment, but the finger of the Red Countess pointed forward and he, with dignity withdrew, leaving her alone again in the vaulted chamber.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN THE WINE WAS RED.

"What does this mean?" Colonel Browski asked himself as he went down the broad steps and when, at the curb, he could have thrown the young American into the hands of the police without a warning.

Suddenly the soldier stopped and threw one of his hands to his forehead.

A light seemed to break upon his mind.

Was it love? Had Luzia suddenly fallen in love with the patriot and was he to be discarded for the hated foreigner? The fox of jealousy gnawed at the officer's vitals and his brain grew hot as if a dozen white-heated irons had been drawn across it.

"Love?" The word came into his throat from the depths of his passionate soul. He had heard much about the Countess' fickleness in love. He knew that one fool had gone to Siberia or her that several others had thrown themselves into the Neva.

He dared no think of it. The pandemonium

(Continued on page six.)

A BOY'S BREAKFAST

There's a Natural Food That Makes Its Own Way.

There's a boy up in Hoosick Falls, N. Y., who is growing into sturdy manhood on Grape-Nuts breakfasts. It might have been different with him as his mother explains:

"My 11-year-old boy is large, well developed and active, and has been made so by his fondness for Grape-Nuts food. At five years he was a very nervous child and was subject to frequent attacks of indigestion which used to rob him of his strength and were very troublesome to deal with. He never seemed to care for anything for his breakfast until I tried Grape-Nuts, and I have never had to change from that. He makes his entire breakfast of Grape-Nuts food. It is always relished by him and he says that it satisfies him better than the ordinary kind of a meal.

"Better than all he is no longer troubled with indigestion or nervousness, and has got to be a splendidly developed fellow since he began to use Grape-Nuts food." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

There's a reason. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

LOVE'S TRANSFORMATION;

Or, HER TERRIBLE SECRET. - - By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER V.

"Branded With Love's Shame."

June faded into July, and July gave way to August. After that glorious month came September, and with it the beginning of Florette's tragedy. During the long summer she had lived in a dream of paradise, so happy that she often wondered if it could be she, the one time lonely child. To her gentle mind Marshfield was an ideal lover and husband, and she gave him her full love, trust, and tenderness, living entirely in the present, and never thinking of the future. There met in the beautiful woods of Hayden, and only the birds and flowers knew their secret. Mirilly, Florette thought, of course, that in time there would be a home like other married people had, and that she and Marshfield would settle down to a rather prosaic life, but for the present she glorified in the romance of her love story, and desired no change.

She was too young, too unversed in the ways of the world, to know anything about her rights had she been this man's wife. All she thought of was his love and the tenderness which he always showed her. As for him, the man of experience, he reflected. Insensibly this young girl had stolen into his heart and he realized with a shock that he really loved her, and that his happiness was strangely tied up in her.

His god for years had been the great world. He felt that it was impossible to live without it and such happiness as he had never been in his wicked heart a thought of tying himself down with a wife unless it was with a rich one and one of high standing in social circles. When Marshfield Lennox first met Florette, he had intended taking her to New York and establishing her in a little flat, where he could easily visit her, but as the long summer days went on, filled as they were with such sweet pleasure, he resolved to cut loose from the chains which were binding him closer and closer to the girl he had solemnly betrayed.

Time and time again he had started to cut the knot, but his purpose had failed before the calm, sweet appearance of the lovely face and the love in the blue eyes. However, matters were claiming his attention in New York and he resolved to leave her with promises of a return, and then to write her. With this purpose in his heart, he met her at their old trysting place at the fallen tree, and after kissing her tenderly, he said gently:

"Sweetheart, I have bad news for us."

"Bad news!" Florette cried, and she was really pained by the grief in her eyes.

"Yes, but it will not be for long, Darling. I have to leave you for a week," he whispered, his arms crying about her instinctively. Yes, he was glad he had resolved to write. He never could have spoken such words to the sweet, tender young thing.

"Leave me!" she gasped.

"Just for a few days, sweet, and then I will come back for you, and we will never part again."

"Take me with you, Florette pleaded. "I cannot bear to have you go!"

The man shook his head gravely. "I cannot, dear. I must go with my boss—he must summons came this evening. It is business."

"But how will I live until you return?" she cried, the young creature who before his advent had been happy and care-free.

Her face looked pinched and pale in the moonlight, now cold with coming autumn. Beneath their feet were fallen leaves, as she spoke, Florette shivered. It was becoming too cold and damp to sit out of doors with impunity.

"It will just be for a few days, darling. Do not make the parting too hard for me," the man pleaded, selfishly appealing to her tenderness.

"Then you feel it, too?" she cried.

"Darling!" he cried reproachfully, clasping her to his bosom.

He did feel sorry, more so than ever before in his life, but he had no intention of shielding her. He did not want a wife; he wanted the free life of a bachelor, and did not intend to sacrifice any of its pleasures for her. However, he allowed nothing of this to appear in his voice or manner. He rained kisses down upon the lovely face, and made solemn promises to the girl who clung to him, tears pouring from her eyes.

Florette was strangely oppressed; why, she did not know. His repeated assurance of his speedy return failed to comfort her. What she dreaded she did not know, only that it did not seem as though she could bear to let him go, but her pleading only strengthened his resolve, and at last he said firmly:

"Pet, be brave. I must go now so as to catch the train. Kiss me, and let me go," and, obedient as she had always been to his slightest request, she was forced to put aside her grief and listen to him.

"You will come back?" she pleaded.

"Come back! Of course I will, my love, my life!" he promised, he who had not the slightest intention of doing so. A little

"Swear that you will," she said in a low, steady tone, prompted by an instinct she could not explain.

"I swear," he returned, raising his right hand toward the heavens as he had once thought opened to her childish eyes.

Then he caught her once more in his arms, crushed her against his heart, kissed her upon the lips, and was gone, while she, broken-hearted, leaned against a tree and felt earth and sky slipping away from her.

When she regained consciousness, it was lying upon the ground, and the moon was under a cloud. For a minute she lay there, wondering; then she remembered, and she was not so desolate, and tried to laugh away her depression.

"Just a little week, and he will be back," she whispered, and again and again she carried back home to plan many things to help her pass away the weary hours.

The days dragged wearily, and she was astonished to feel ill for the first time in her young life.

"I am worrying too much," she told herself, knowing so little of nature and its secrets.

Days and again she visited the woods, with its memories, and spent the greater portion of her time lying stretched out on the fallen tree trunk, with her face hid, and see once more the visions of her girlhood, the days when Marshfield Lennox had first came before her vision, shutting out heaven and earth and all else except the one figure she had spent beneath these leaves, now floating earthward in such sad plenty.

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"Come back! Of course I will, my love,

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quoted to her the first time they had met:

"Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."

With shaking fingers, she took up the Bible which had been her mother's, and read through Solomon's Song, which he had told her was the sweetest love song ever written.

Full well did she know its truth, for she could not root out her love. It had been given for all time, and though the man had proved unworthy, she still loved him with all her sweet nature, and felt her very life slipping away because she was deprived of his love and her faith in his truth.

The young thing was growing sadly thin and pale. All of the beautiful girlish bloom was gone. In the blue eyes was an expression of grief so terrible that it attracted the attention of the good clergyman, who had not the little thing's form in the old church Marshfield had mentioned to Florette.

"The child has something terrible on her mind," the man said to himself, and he wondered. She was so young it seemed impossible that she should have known grief of any kind, but the traces were plainly visible, and knowing that she was so young, he determined to watch her, and speak to her at the first opportunity. It came very soon after this that he made resolve. It was on a cold, dreary day in November. The trees which had sheltered poor Florette's lover and herself in their trysting bare limbs heavenward. The little girl sat beneath the tree, her head bent low, and no birds were in the branches over the fallen tree.

Florette, shivering, and feeling strangely ill, had crept to the church, to sob away a little of the pain which she knew not what ways stood open, and the good minister, who had been praying, and was just rising, stricken to see her lying flat upon the floor in front of the altar, white face turned toward the grouned roof which was painted with richly carved rafters.

Gently and with the silent figure, his heart in his mouth; then a new terror came to him. Not dead, but he almost wished she were not, for he read a secret unknown to her as yet. However, distrust, one of the attributes of his office, he forced and summoned the village physician, and bore Florette's side.

"You are right," the physician said in a low voice, "the child is ill."

Reproaching himself for what he felt was neglect of duty, the minister echoed the physician's words, and his assistance to bringing the girl back to her sorrow.

Slowly the blue eyes opened, and she gazed wildly about.

"Where am I?" she cried, struggling into a sitting position.

Both men noticed that she did not appear surprised at anything wrong in her appearance.

"In our church," the minister said gravely.

"Yes, I remember," she said with some thing of a shudder. "I felt ill and fainted. I have not been well lately. I have meant to come and tell you how ill I have been," she continued, turning to the physician, who looked amazed.

"Why did you not, child?" he asked slowly.

"Since, and I do not understand it," she replied with gentle dignity. "I have not been sick, you know, since I had the whooping cough when I was a little girl. I was afraid to see me and gave me such dreadful medicine that I was afraid to come with a pitiful little smile. By this time she was standing upon her feet, though trembling, and although there was a strange dignity about her—that dignity which comes to those who suffer—she looked like a creature about to gush.

The two men exchanged glances; then the minister spoke.

"My child," he said gently, "I knew both your parents."

"Yes, I know you did," she returned softly.

"I married them, and baptized the little mother who died young."

"And I brought you into the world, Florette," the physician added.

Florette extended a little hand to each and felt strangely comforted.

Then suddenly the wedding ring upon her ungloved hand and took heart.

"Gentlemen," she continued, his voice very tender, "don't you think you ought to confide in your two oldest friends?"

She was the first at him, and then at the minister, her breath coming quickly; then she shook her head.

"No. I have had a great sorrow, but it is better to say nothing about it," she said gravely.

"My child!" the minister said, after clearing his throat, "we have neglected you sadly, and we deserve part of the blame. Tell us what you have been doing."

"How do you know there is anything to hide?" she asked gently.

"My dear child, do not fence with us," the good man cried, "for the time is coming when you cannot hide it from any one!"

Florette looked startled, but her sweet face did not flush, she showed no signs of shame.

"I do not understand," she replied.

"Florette, you said you had been feeling ill. Do you know why? You must."

"No, I do not," Florette replied, meeting the grieved eyes of the physician with perfect frankness.

"Impossible!" burst from the lips of the clergyman.

The physician saw how innocent she was, and understood better than the other man, so he said gently, watching her to see that she did not faint:

"My child you wear a wedding ring upon your finger. It is time for your husband to come and acknowledge you before the world."

Now the young head dropped; the cheeks, so white and thin flushed crimson, but the sweet lips did not part.

"He owes it to her child to you, but also to your child," the doctor continued.

"My child!" Florette cried. "Oh, what do you mean?"

That fearful cry of pain must have been entered against Marshfield Lennox by the Recording Angel.

Both good men helped the stricken girl to a seat, and then the physician as gently as possible explained to her that in a few months she would bring into the world a little child.

She sat very quiet, the words ringing in her ears. Secluded as her life had been, she had heard a little of the outside world, and she knew how children born as hers would be were regarded, and at last she asked in a tone so full of grief that tears sprung to the eyes of her companions:

"Is there no mistake?"

"Absolutely none," she was assured.

She sat perfectly still for a moment more, then a noble resolve sprang into being. She drew herself to her new herself together, and replied so quietly as almost to deceive them:

"You are right; I must send for my husband. He has been detained by business. I did not know anything of it, but I will be. Thank you so much for telling me."

"When you were married?" asked the minister in a tone of great relief.

Florette remembered that ceremony in the forest of Hayden. Yes, she was married, even if the marriage had not been legal, so she replied quickly:

"Yes, I was married, of course."

"But where?" the minister said the physician, not convinced.

"I must not tell you that until my husband returns," was the dignified answer, and then she arose and left them, and they heard all trouble in the face as she did so. After her figure was lost in the distance, the physician turned to the minister and said:

"I don't believe it."

"Nor I, although I am sure that she meant all right."

"Nor I. But I am afraid that husband will never return. We must see her home."

"Of course," and then they, too, left the sacred edifice.

Meanwhile Florette hurried home, feeling that indeed her world had come to an end. She had thought of her future in fearful, but she had done it for the sake of the life she bore beneath her heart. For herself she cared but little. The storm of grief had broken over her head, leaving her lying crushed beneath its fury, but strength for the sake of her little child she must take immediate action. Sobbing and panting, she resolved to run away, not in search of Marshfield Lennox, for she was too proud for that, but to find a new home where her shame would not be known. If the little one had to come into the world, it must do so with a clean name. She had been a child when Marshfield Lennox had found a girl when he left her; a hapless young thing, but a woman. It was from a great fear her strength when she had been told of her coming motherhood. Now she was a woman, strong and determined in spite of bodily weakness, and she laid her plans with unusual faculty. Insight.

She had kept the bills Marshfield had sent her, two hundred dollars, hoping some time to give them back. She would not starved rather than to have used them for herself alone, but now she knew that she had no shame in doing so. In addition she had a hundred dollars saved from her pocket money, for she had had few expenses. To this added the few valuables in her trunk—including the diamond ring Marshfield had given her, and placed it with some necessary clothing in a small leather valise. Wrapping herself up warmly, she took this in her hand, and leaving the house where all of her life had been spent, she started across the fields to a railroad station ten miles away.

It was only 5 o'clock, but dark, and it was somewhat cold, and Florette shivered. Each, a sad young figure in that weary waste. Her strength was greatly taxed by the weight of the valise, but she struggled on, thinking of what had been told her, and determined to carry out her purpose.

As she walked along, occasionally stumbling, her mind wandered, and at times and from time to time she brushed the snow from her face, and her tears fell like blood. From now on, she was going to act, and to create a home for herself and for the innocent creature she was bring into the world.

CHAPTER VII.

"Fame Is Not Love, Nor Applause Honor."

The great theater was crowded with an enthusiastic audience, which applauded and applauded to the echo, and forced the young actress to return again and again.

"What a beautiful voice!"

"Magnificent acting!"

"Wonderful and natural!"

These were a few of the exclamations which were heard on every side.

Smiling, bowing, her golden hair ruffled by the stormy scene through which she had passed, the actress stood before the almost crazy audience that refused to be quieted. Suddenly she smiled, and advancing, she began to sing. None in that great concourse knew that she possessed that gift, and all were taken by surprise.

So quiet was it during the song, as the sweet, mellow tones rang out, that it was as though no one were present, but when she finished, the storm burst forth again, and it seemed as though the roof would rise at the clamor.

At last the manager appeared and asked that consideration be shown the actress, for, as he said:

"She's playing a very exhausting part, and has already favored you by singing for you."

Sensible that they were a little unreason-

ble, the people quieted down, and eagerly read their programs to learn all they could about the next act.

The young actress was very lovely and girlish, and yet there was something about her face and eyes, which told that she had not learned to act as she did without going through some terrible suffering.

"I am glad they like me," she said quite simply to the local manager as she came from her dressing-room for a second act.

"Like you! They couldn't help it," the manager replied bluntly.

"Then I am fit!" she asked, betraying by her pleased tone that she had been for some time in England.

"Well I should say 'yes,'" came the rough and ready answer.

"London was not so enthusiastic, but then neither was New York," the actress continued.

"You want to come here to Chicago if you want to have true appreciation."

The actress laughed musically, and then receiving her cue, she appeared upon the stage.

The manager stood looking after her until he was interrupted by the actress' own manager, who asked:

"Admiring my find?"

"Yes, I am, Markham. Where did you pick her up?"

"My secret; but isn't she a beaut?"

The local manager nodded. He admired the actress and her acting, but there was something in the beautiful face that played upon his heartstrings.

"Hell!" he muttered. "How that girl must have suffered."

"Suffered?"

"Yes. Listen to her voice," the local manager cried, and the two held their breath as the full, broken notes floated back to them.

"I never thought of it before, but that's true. She must have gone in for a pretty good deal of trouble. Listen! Why, her voice is full of tears!"

"That's just it. See the tears are streaming down her face."

"She always cries when she is playing that kind of a part, and that's what takes it out of her."

The two men then adjourned to the office of the local manager, and the young actress went on with her part in such a way that she had every woman in the audience crying, as well as a number of the men.

"I never saw such acting!" cried one woman to another.

"Nor such a voice," returned her companion.

"She sings well."

"Yes, I mean her speaking voice."

"Yes, it's wonderful. Why, it scarcely seems possible that an actress can play as she does and not live the play."

"I suppose that's what tires her out so."

All about similar conversations were held, and no one had a single criticism to offer.

As the actress left her dressing-room, wrapped in costly sables, her manager stepped forward.

"Mrs. Cameron," he said quietly, "I think I will accompany you tonight. I am afraid you will be worried by some of your admirers."

"Thank you," the actress replied gently. "I will appreciate it," and with her hand upon the arm of Rinch Markham, she left the theater, and made her way through two rows of admiring young and old men, all bareheaded. Her own companion could scarcely find room in the carriage, so filled was it with flowers, the gifts of her admiring public, and the actress said as they drove away:

"I am sure I am sitting upon some of the roses."

"Never mind. There are plenty more."

"Yes, but I hate to hurt any of them," was the reply.

Off the stage this actress was one of the most quiet of women. Her voice was so low and sad that it was rarely heard. She seemed to put on another self once she left the theater.

"Tender little heart!" the manager said quite simply.

"You laugh at me for loving flowers so much, I know," the actress said with a smile.

"No. I am much amused, though, with your idea that flowers can be hurt."

The actress gave him another little smile seen by the light of a street lamp, and then there was silence until the carriage drew up in front of the apartment building in which the actress had established herself.

The manager, jumping out, pressed the bell of the janitor's apartment, and then handed out the actress. She emerged with her arms full of flowers; he filled his own, and a whole procession of two came flying but did the same. Both of the latter had to make several trips which to depend for a future, and young and inexperienced as she was, the girl knew that it would be her coming child, that she was willing to endure almost anything. In her books she had read often of England, and with rare discrimination, immediately upon her arrival in London, she visited a land agent, and fortunately hit upon one who was honest. By him she was established with a peasant family in County Sussex, where she composed herself to wait for the birth of her little child.

On the way over, worn out by sleepless nights during which she could not force a fever, Florette was ill, and the kind-hearted physician who attended her warned her of the evil effect any indulgence in excessive emotion would have upon the little one growing so near to her unless with hers. Therefore, although wondrously desolate, Florette encouraged, by trial, to be more cheerful, and to keep her thoughts from straying into the past.

With a soft, clinging gown of white wool for she wore only black and white, with her little golden head rising like some delicate flower, a strange, beautiful light illuminating her countenance, and her eyes shining like blue stars, she poured out her whole soul in a wondrous flood of melody. Entranced the rector listened, and insensibly his heart left his bosom, never to return.

The sorrowing girl sang on and on, and the young rector stood listening, his head bent. At last the landlady, still hearing the music, came in, and disturbed the spell. Florette turning at the landlady's summons saw before her a slight young man, a little under-sized, with a clean-shaven, ascetic face, above which soft brown hair was carefully parted in the middle. He was in the garb of a clergyman, and was every inch a gentleman, and something more—a man of God. His expression, and clear brown eyes showed what he was—a man to be trusted and to whom every confidence could be given.

Florette, so maimed and bruised by life's conflict, felt peace the moment she looked at him, and she did not need the landlady's, "Mrs. Cameron," the title the rector, Mr. Anderson," to tell her who he was.

Florette had given herself her mother's maiden name of Cameron. She did not want to retain her own; she would not take the name of the man who betrayed her trust, and so she went back to the maiden name of the mother who had died in giving her life.

To her surprise, Florette had found that her wearing of the wedding ring Marshfield Lennox had given her was regarded by the simple English people sufficiently proof of her marriage, and believing her newly bereft, they all considerately refrained from asking her any questions, for which she was very thankful. She had taken her grandmother's given name, Rosalie, and felt confident that in Mrs. Rosalie Cameron no one would seek for poor little Florette Maywood, who lost her heart and peace in the beautiful woods of Hayden.

When introduced to the beautiful girl, scarcely more than a child, Mr. Anderson bowed, and said in his pleasant way, which made friends for him everywhere:

"I have called upon you, Mrs. Cameron,

"I am glad they like me."

create a new atmosphere for herself, in order that no shadow could ever attach to by their sale to pay her passage to England, and to land in London with an extra one hundred dollars to add to her other three hundred. Still, four hundred dollars is a small amount upon which to depend for a future, and young and inexperienced as she was, the girl knew that it would be her coming child, that she was willing to endure almost anything. In her books she had read often of England, and with rare discrimination, immediately upon her arrival in London, she visited a land agent, and fortunately hit upon one who was honest. By him she was established with a peasant family in County Sussex, where she composed herself to wait for the birth of her little child.

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(Continued on page seven.)

"Not tonight," was the gentle answer, as the wonderful woman crossed the room, and opening a door, disappeared within. She was tall and stately, with a perfect figure and graceful movements. Her beautiful face was very grave, though, and her tender lips quivered as she went into an inner room, and passed at the door.

There before her was a child's bed, and upon it lay a perfectly lovely little girl, with golden hair curling about her sweet, rosy face.

Silently the woman crossed to her, and knelt beside the little one. Almost without any sound she bent and pressed her lips to one of the dimpled hands, but slight as it was, the action aroused the child. A pair of eyes opened, and a gay voice cried:

"Hello, mamma, sweet! Are you back?"

"Yes, pet," came in a low, tense voice.

"I want to sleep with you," declared the little beauty, and the mother did not object, but when she was ready to retire she gathered her darling in her arms, and sank into a deep slumber with her child resting against the heart that the father of the little girl had broken six weary years before; for Rosalie Cameron, the famous actress, was only Rosalie Maywood, who had gained fame and fortune under the name she was creating for herself.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A Love Eternal, Like The Everlasting Hills."

When Florette landed in New York after her will flight, she immediately disposed of her possessions, which, although few, were valuable. Of course she failed to obtain anything like their real value, but was able some time before she could add anything to what she had. Still, so bound was she to

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Greater the joy the shorter is its duration.

Many a man's meanness is due to chronic stomach trouble.

What a man's wife thinks of him is not far from the truth.

A coward is a man who knows he's wrong but refuses to admit it.

Unless a man has faith in his works he will not work faithfully.

Those who make a specialty of hunting trouble bag plenty of game.

Only a brave man would marry a woman who isn't afraid of a mouse.

Some men learn to fear treachery by studying their own natures.

About the last thing on earth a man wants to think of is his finish.

Some people try to hide their ignorance by saying that they are superstitious.

Fish make excellent brain food; even fishing stimulates the imagination.

It's a good thing for some of us that we are not recognized as "good things."

Experience begets wisdom—but usually too late in the game to be of any value.

Children who ask questions are often just as ignorant as grown people who can't answer them.

An old man is as proud of his ability to do a day's work as a young man is of his ability to avoid it.

While a man may be capable of loving two women at a time, if he is sensible he will not attempt it.

Wise is the man who knows himself thoroughly and doesn't try to find out things about his neighbor.

A single sentence from a police judge is far more effective than a dozen sentences from a political orator.

If a young man's attack of love is the genuine article, he never thinks of postponing the wedding until he can afford to marry.

The average woman is willing to patch up a quarrel with her neighbor because of the pleasure it affords her to rip the patch off again.

A writer says: "Nothing is best achieved by indirection." The workings of a cockscrew would seem to refute this otherwise plausible theory.

The Red Countess.

(Continued from page three.)

officer of the Preobrajensky Guards turned suddenly into a side street and rushed into a little cafe where he could cool his fevered brain.

Seated at one of the tables in one corner of the room he spied Sergius Orloff.

That young Russian whom he saw last in the presence of the Red Countess caught sight of Browski and frowned.

The Colonel pushed down the narrow aisle choked by some fifty people and took a chair at Orloff's table.

"Good night, friend Sergius," said the giant Colonel. "I have dropped into the Cafe Neva for a little recreation."

"And a little wine, too, no doubt," grinned Orloff. "You have heard of the riot?"

"On the Quay Nicholas? Yes. The soldiers crushed it out, eh?"

"Not without a fight," smiled Sergius. "It was the prettiest thing I've ever seen the Cossacks do. They came upon the scene at full charge and rode into the mass irresistibly. The way they scattered the vermin was a caution."

Any casualties?" queried Browski, as he tried to catch the eyes of a waiter.

"Not less than two hundred. They rode over about thirty women and one Cossack spitted a child on his lance and carried it thus through the ruin. It was great, I say. Three old women were crushed under the hoofs of the black steeds and a young woman was hauled up against a building and shot to death by the Guards. A few more such lessons and you'll hear the last of Nihilism in the capital."

It delighted Sergius to speak thus. His eyes sparkled when he talked and his hands in pantomime enacted part of the terrible scene he had witnessed.

By this time wine had been ordered and Sergius and his guest offered each a glass.

Others at adjoining tables had been attracted toward them and were looking and listening covertly. The name of the Countess was known all over St. Petersburg.

"Let's drink to her," said Browski as he lifted his glass from the oval table.

"To the Countess," said the younger one. "That would be just the thing."

"No, beauty first," smiled Browski. "Let us remember the name of that dear creature in St. Petersburg, a hours from whose delightful presence I have just come. You have filled, I see, Sergius. Here's to the Countess Daniloff, the Fairest Jewel of the Czar, the regal beauty of love's harem and—"

"Fool! Scoundrel!" broke the sentence, and the next moment Browski's face was crimson, for the wine which Sergius Orloff's glass had struck it fairly.

The young lover of the Red Countess was upon his feet in an instant and half a dozen people who had witnessed the episode also stood.

It required a full minute for Colonel Browski to regain his composure.

Sergius' act was so unexpected and swift that the other did not have time to escape the crimson flood.

On the other side of the table, flushed to the temples, stood Sergius Orloff, who had done it all.

The gleam in Sergius Orloff's eyes was the gleam of the tiger's, but he did not speak.

Quietly Colonel Browski brushed the wine from his face with his handkerchief and then for the first time looked across the table upon his enemy.

"Poor boy!" said he in mock pity. "Men have gone to Siberia for less than that."

Sergius did not speak.

"By the way," sarcastically continued the soldier, "we did not get to drink the toast. Come, we will try it again."

He refilled his glass with all the coolness of a lawyer and lifted it haughtily down.

"Here's to the angel of St. Petersburg, the pledged friend of Colonel Browski the bravest men, not of boys."

He drank off the wine with great gusto, looking over the rim of his glass at the young man who the other side of the table was biting his lips in impotent rage over his chin.

"Good-night, my boy," sneered Browski, as he put the glass down and turned away. "I wish you a pleasant journey over the white steppes of Siberia."

With his back turned upon Sergius, Colonel Browski walked haughtily down the aisle, looking neither to the right nor left till he reached the lighted pavement.

"That was a fine performance," spoke at his elbow. "If you will permit I will congratulate you."

Browski turned and saw before him a handsome man, elegantly appearance dressed in a rich fur-bordered overcoat.

He started at sight of the speaker.

"You spoke just now, did you not?" said the officer.

"Yes, I said—"

"I heard you, sir. By the way, isn't your name Guy Spence, and are you not the American who has a studio on the Nevsky Prospect?"

"My name is Spence and I am an American."

"Thank you, sir. Now, Mr. Spence, will you come with me for a little talk? Not back into that wine cellar," and Browski glanced over his shoulder.

"I shall be delighted," said Spence. "After what I have just witnessed I shall be pleased to give Colonel Browski all the time he craves."

The giant of the Guards ran his arm through Spence's and the two walked away.

"We can go to my studio," said the young American. "It is not four squares off——"

"I can find a place nearer than that," was the interruption. "We turn here. And, by Jove! yonder is a sledge——"

Browski lifted his voice and the vehicle came to the sidewalk.

Spence drew back as a wild thought flashed through his mind, but he was hustled by main strength into the sledge.

The soldier said something in a whisper to the driver and then took a seat by Spence's side

"What means this?" demanded the young American. "Whither are you taking me?"

"Silence!" was the reply whispered hoarsely at his ear. "If you resist in the least, young sir, I'll blow your brains out!"

"Am I under arrest?"

"You will see in a short time. A still tongue is now the best friend you ever had."

CHAPTER XI.

WOMAN AND WOMAN.

In the meantime the Red Countess was having a visitor for whom she had not looked.

She was alone in her rich boudoir when a liveried servant informed her that a young girl was at the portals asking for the Countess Daniloff.

"I am not dispensing alms tonight, Boris," said the beauty, with a slight turn of her head. "Tell the poor creature that this is not my charity day."

The door shook like one of the street vermin," said the man. "She is richly dressed and——"

"Did she give you her name?" interposed the Countess.

"No, she said that she would like to see you."

"Let her in, Boris, and escort her to the blue room."

The servant bowed and vanished while the Red Countess went on with her letter writing a few moments.

When she had written she tore up and threw the fragments of the letter into a burner of the grate fire.

Then, glancing at her face in a large gold-framed mirror, she quitted the chamber, but there was no noise in the heavy carpets over which they patted.

A minute later she threw wide the door of a room whose hangings were a rich blue and looked around.

On one of the sofas she caught sight of her visitor who rose at sight of her and bowed profoundly.

Luzia went forward, a smirk of surprise on her face which changed short as she had a good look at her visitor.

"You have called to see me?" said she, falling back a step and sending a hasty glance around the room.

"I have come to see the Countess Demidoff."

"She stands before you, Miss."

"I have no reason to conceal my identity. I am Olga Galitzin, the daughter of a captain in the Pavlovski Guards."

"Then you are loyal to the Great White Czar."

A look of resentment seemed to light up Olga Galitzin's eyes for a moment, but it faded as suddenly.

"I did not come hither to talk about that," said Olga, with a smile. "You are in the Czar's pay?"

"I——"

Luzia's face flushed to the temples and she caught her self-control with the sudden spring of a wild beast.

"The Czar's pay!" she echoed. "What is that to you, girl?"

"Much," responded Olga. "You have woven a net around a friend of mine."

"Ha!" exclaimed Luzia. "Then there is some business to be done call?"

The Captain's daughter did not seem to hear the impassioned words.

"Guy Spence, the American painter, is that friend," she went on.

The Red Countess bowed.

"Your lover, you mean?"

"You may put it that way if you wish. We all have our lovers."

"And you have come this foreigner?"

"One has a right to choose even in Russia, has she not?" cried Olga. "Who is to choose for a woman but herself?"

A light laugh broke over the lips of the Red Countess.

"Well, what is your mission?" she said, speaking suddenly. "You have said that you seek audience with me."

"I do. I have come to say this: Please keep your hands off from my friend, the American."

At that the face of the Countess flushed again and the lips parted in another tantalizing laugh.

"Indeed!" broke out Olga. "You must not come between my heart and its goal." "I must not, child!" cried Red Countess, and leaned forward, looking Olga squarely in the face. "I must not command the Countess Demidoff? You who have no claim to nobility and whose parent is nothing but a captain in the Czar's guards——"

"Blood tells, I know—tells in St. Petersburg," cried Olga, springing up and turning on the streets of the city this very Countess Demidoff charged the people on and killed with the inhumanity of Huns."

"Yes, they stained the sacred stones of the Czar's capital with the blood of wild beasts."

The speaker did not see the hands of Olga close till the nails cut through the bloodless skin and wounded her.

She saw only the dark, flashing eyes of the Captain's daughter, nothing more.

"The brutes on horseback killed a little child and one of them spitted it on his lance——"

"Then that one will never become a Nihilist."

"They killed a young girl, too—"

"Then she will never mother a viper's brood!" cried Luzia.

"Now let us go back to my 'command,' as you call it. You must not interfere with Guy Spence."

"Because you say it, girl? Am I to listen to the vaporings of one of the gutter brood of St. Petersburg?"

At this the hand of Olga came out from under the furred cloak she wore.

With a cry the Red Countess sprang back and her eyes snapped the fire of Semiuus fury.

Clutched in the white hand of Galitzin's daughter was a dagger and Luzia saw her fingers wound about the black hilt with the order of one used to wielding such a weapon.

Suddenly the voice of Luzia was heard beyond the blue room.

In an instant the door flew open and Boris rushed in, regardless of his mistress and then her visitor.

"To the street with you viper!" cried Luzia, her jeweled hand covering Olga, who had not moved since drawing the dagger. "Out with the scum of the gutter!"

Boris advanced a step, his snake-like eyes darting flashes at veteran at Olga.

He had placed himself between the girl and his mistress and seemed ready for anything. He had the physique of a giant, brood-thouldered and as fierce as a Nubian lion.

"Out with her, no matter how roughly you treat her!" exclaimed Luzia. "I will stand between you and the law, Boris."

There was a curse and a spring and the hand with which Olga struck in perfection was beaten down and she found herself struggling in Boris' grip.

The Red Countess looked on with keen delight and in her eyes burned a woman's vengeance.

Olga was forced across the carpet.

The hot blood had mounted to her fair cheeks and she saw the demon look he gave her.

"Into the street with the low spawn!" hissed Luzia. "See that she does not come back, my Boris."

The Russian laughed a low laugh which went to Olga's heart like a knife as she reached the door.

"Let her hand out!" she cried, as for a moment she caught the eye of the Countess, for a hare comes to the American painter, woo be the fine countess Demidoff!"

She could say no more, for she was lifted from the floor and borne from the room.

The bitter laugh of the Red Countess reached her ears as the door closed on the squaring of a door.

In another second she felt the cold breath of the winter night on her face as she fell almost headlong down a flight of steps with the hand of Boris at her throat in her ears. And back of it all she thought she heard the triumphant laughing voice of the woman she had left in the blue room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAGE AND THE BIRD.

Guy Spence, the American artist, had not ridden far in the Colonel Browski when he found himself blindfolded by main force.

He might have resisted, but he resolved to remain quiet and see the end of this mystery.

At last the sledge came to a halt and he was lifted out by the giant soldier and carried into a house of some size. How far he was borne he did not know, but at last he was placed upon his feet in the hall and left there.

A door opened and shut and Spence, whose hands had not been secured, jerked the handkerchief from his face.

He was in the occupant of a room of fair size, well furnished, with elegant side table and a fine fireplace.

He had never been in that chamber before, and for some time he attempted to guess where he was. Doubtless he was in some palace, but whose and where he could not imagine.

A sense of warmth pervaded the apartment and a look at the fireplace showed the ceiling enabled the prisoner to see everything connected with the prison.

At last a smile crossed the face he rose and crossed the chamber to the one door which it contained.

He found it locked as he expected, and after trying it a little while he retraced his steps to the cosy chair.

A glance at his watch told him that it was early morning, so he began to think that he would see no one before morning and then he dozed and fell asleep.

There stood in the doorway a tall man in livery who looked like a soldier, but said nothing.

"Where am I?" asked the American. "Will you tell me why I have been brought to this place? This is no public prison."

"Your curiosity will avail you nothing, for questions will avail you nothing," said the darkly-dressed man.

"So you have your orders, then?"

"Why not?"

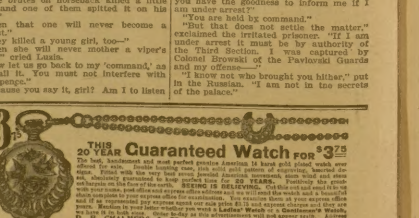
This only enraged Spence. He would have darted forward had not sober second thought held him back. Why try the patience of this guard? Why invite a fate which he might escape by being more circumspect and calm?

"If you will not tell me where I am will you have the goodness to inform me if I am under arrest?"

"You are held by command."

"But that does not settle the matter," exclaimed the irritated prisoner. "If I am under arrest it must be by authority of the Third Section. I was captured by Colonel Browski of the Pavlovski Guards and my offense——"

"I know not who brought you hither," put in the man. "I am not in the secrets of the palace."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"Oh, a palace, then!" cried Spence. "One more question."

The man had reached the door and was about to quit the room.

"I promise not to answer it."

"You shall hear it at all events. If this is a palace and not a prison strictly speaking, though armed have been prisons, tell me if I am not in the Demidoff establishment."

The minion started a little and Spence thought he detected a gleam of humor in his eyes.

"I have told you that I would not reply to your extraordinary questions. You must excuse me," and with this he opened the door, sprang across the threshold and slammed the portal in Spence's face.

"That's a cool piece of insolence, exclaimed the American when he found himself alone again. "If I am in the Countess Demidoff's palace this is a part of the intrigue. Olga has called the witch of St. Petersburg the Czar's spy and she may have become one for the work that has fallen to my hands. If this be true then indeed have I played the fool for a woman's love!"

The next moment he regretted his hot words.

Censure Olga he would not. If through her he had joined the Black Thirty and thereby gotten himself in the meshes of death, he would upbraid no one but himself.

The girl was honest in her Nihilistic opinions, and Spence, as deeply rooted as her love for him, and he knew that was deep enough. He would not blame her, no! He himself was the fool and a woman's love is the same the world over and will be till the end of time.

For an hour Spence watched that one door.

Silence lay beyond it and baffled him. No footsteps came to the portal and the key did not turn in the lock. The globe continued to shower its light over the room, and he fell to studying the frescoes on the ceiling, admitting silently that they had been done by a master hand.

The carpet beneath his feet breathed of wealth. Surely he was under the roof of some one with wealth at his or her command. If he was the Red Countess prisoner he would see her in time and there would be an explanation. There was nothing for him to do but wait.

At last drowsiness came to his senses. The languid air of the room robbed him of watchfulness and he gently fell off into a sleep which he could not beat back.

When he awoke he was surprised to see that the globe no longer illuminated the room, that a streak of daylight had fallen across the carpet.

The night had passed and St. Petersburg was awake once more.

Spence now saw that the window which he had noticed the night before admitted the light.

Springing from his chair he darted across the carpet, tore the rich curtains aside and gazed through the thick French glass.

He looked over a celebrated part of the city. He caught sight of the roofs of the palaces of the nobility and gentry, beyond a bridge that spanned the frozen Neva.

While he stood at the window the faint yet well-known notes of a military bugle came to his ears. He had heard it before on the great parade ground when the regiments marched down the Nevsky Prospect to the Emperor's review.

Presently he caught sight of the waving plumes of a Cossack regiment, then he saw the men themselves and the black steeds that bore the fierce soldiers of the Don.

It was the Royal Dons, as the regiment was called, those wild men who charge mobs and gatherings at the Czar's will and who delight in the butchery of the people.

Spence gazed at the marching squadrons as they came nearer in the street below. It was a grand sight for the young American and so wrapped up in it did he become that for the moment he forgot the adventures of the night before and his present situation.

Spence grew oblivious of his surroundings in watching the Don Cossacks; he did not hear the noise of the vaulted chamber door open nor catch the footsteps that came forward with the noiseless tread of the tiger.

He had dreamed of transferring to one of his living canvases a scene like the one he was studying. But now he was a captive and known—as he could verily believe—to be the intended assassin of the Czar of all the Russias.

The cup had to be dashed from his lips. Before him lay Siberia, behind him—if he failed of his mission—death!

At last the final squadron passed without so much as giving him a glance, and Spence drew back with a sigh.

"The Czar's executioners!" he said aloud. "Is it a wonder that men hate him?"

With the last word he turned, saw himself confronted by the person who had stolen into the room, and uttered a cry as he recoiled, for, clad in red from head to foot, bewitching in her great beauty and with her gaze fastened upon him, stood Lucia Demidoff, the Red Countess!

This thrilling and extraordinary story of life and tragedy in the realm of the Czar will be continued through several numbers of the Ledger, unraveling a profound mystery and leading the reader through strange intrigues and plots. The story will richly repay you if you follow it to the end. Subscribe for the Ledger and get the whole strange and instructive story. Our camerad and premium is still offered free to all subscribers. See pages thirteen and fifteen.

Aunt Jemima—I'm fraid them noo town clo'es o' youm ain't warm enough fer this cold spell.

Uncle Hiram—That's all right. Every time I think what the feller charged me fer 'em I git hot!

Mother—Have you been fighting, Robert? Robert—No (boo-hoo)! I've been fought!

Tent Talk.

The Monkey—Why on earth did you swallow the ringmaster's Prince Albert?

The Ostrich—Because the doctor told me I need a new coat on my stomach!

Love's Transformation.

(Continued from page five.)

she had been foolish to trust to a secret marriage, would come to her, and for the sake of her little one, she would turn resolutely from the past, and try to be content with the present.

When she learned of the rector's great love for music, Florette was delighted to play and sing for him, not knowing that she was taking from him all rest in life and making him miserable by her. Had she realized, she would have shrunk back and shut herself in from light and air, for although she knew she had not willingly sinned, the blight of another's sin was upon her, and she regarded herself as forever smirched. Then, too, once her heart was given, it no longer belonged her. The man she had loved and still loved had done his best to detach his image in her heart, but he had not succeeded. On her knees she thanked God for it, because she could feel a little justified because of her great love, and the fact that she considered herself his wife. He had deceived her, but she could not repudiate him.

Thus the days went by, and one morning when the cowslips and primroses made the whole country yellow, a little girl baby was laid in Florette's arms. As she caused into the great black eyes of the baby, so like those of the father, the nurse of the pain left the gentle bosom, and the young mother began a new life as she clasped the tiny bundle in her arms, murmuring:

"My little comfort! My own little one!"

Another story of life and extraordinary interesting story will appear in next week's issue of the paper. The Ledger is without question the best family paper for the price of subscription now published in the United States. Special free gifts of cameras and patterns are offered on other pages of this issue. Do not miss them.

Rising Star.

The Chicago drummer who was arrested for assaulting the landlord of a South Dakota hotel found that there was only one lawyer in the town and he had been retained by the plaintiff. In this emergency he determined to defend himself, as he was not lawyer enough to plead his own case, but the justice of the peace calmly replied:

"This court will see that you have all your rights, Anybody seen Jim Peters around here?"

"Here, gentlemen," answered some one.

"Then call him in."

Jim turned out to be a long and lathy farmer's hired man, and not at all bright looking, and as he entered the room his honor asked:

"Jim, which end of the cow gets up first?"

"The hinder end, sir."

"And next?"

"The fronter end."

"All right. This drummer has given Joe Hanks a black eye and taken a license to prove that Joe ran ag'in' the door casing and blacked it himself. I'll app'int you at his counsel."

"But I'm no lawyer."

"But you've got common sense, as you've just proved, and that's better yet. Go right ahead."

Jim went ahead, and in ten minutes he had the case so mixed up that the court of honor laid aside his spectacles and said:

"We see no use further. There may have been a row, but Jim is getting ready to prove that the drummer was out to the barn and the drummer across the street, and there's no use going into the time of the cow gets up. I'll divide the costs, and the parties had better shake hands, while as for Jim Peters, he's a darned fool and he continues to be so until it won't be considered no crime around these parts to murder man's claim and steal his wife along with it."

Display of Coolness.

"You should know well what coolness is," said a general. "American history is indebted to many cases of coolness for one of its most perfect and most brilliant examples of this trait."

The young man, flushing a little at the compliment, said, with an embarrassed laugh:

"Oh, there have been many better instances of coolness than mine."

"Not at all," said the general. "Not at all, sir."

"But yet," persisted Captain Hobson.

"For instance?" said the other.

Captain Hobson thought a moment. Then he said:

"The most perfect exhibition of coolness ever made came from a friend of mine—an old man now, but still a bachelor.

"This gentleman loved a beautiful widow in the summer of '96. He courted her with ardor throughout the months of July and August, and in September he proposed.

"It was a certain evening of the evening of the proposal, and my friend and the widow sat indoors, the light lowered, the dusk faintly illuminated by the fire's logs.

"So," my friend ended, 'I love you, and ask your hand in marriage.' And he said, 'Will you,' he said, 'be mine?'

"The widow gazed at the flame thoughtfully. Then in a low voice she said:

"'Don't make me answer immediately. Give me a little time for thought.'

"'Very good,' said my friend. 'How long do you want?'

"'A half hour,' murmured the widow.

"'A half hour be it,' said my friend, taking up his hat. 'And in the meantime,' he added, 'I'll just go down to Smith's and get a shave.'"

Friendly Advice.

Fred—I wish I had nerve enough to propose to Miss Peachleigh.

Tom—All you need to do is tell her you are engaged to another girl.

Fred—Why should I do that?

Tom—Then she'd get busy and try to take you away from the other girl.

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JOLLITY

Had Higher Ideas.

She was a rural maid, fresh from the farm, and it was her first glimpse of a society ball.

"What do you think of the ladies' gowns?" queried her country cousin. "Are they not magnificent?"

"Y-yes," she answered, and a faint blush got busy with her complexion, "but they fall far below what I expected."

Perfectly Awful.

Mrs. Muchwed—Nothing in the world could induce me to live in Russia."

Mrs. Neighbors—It certainly isn't a desirable country to live in."

Mrs. Muchwed—I should say not. Why I was reading in a paper this morning that in Russia no one is permitted to marry more than five times. Such atrocious tyranny is perfectly awful."

WISE.

The Would Be Builder—I'm thinking of building a washhouse in connection with my laundry. What would you suggest for a foundation?
Architect—Soapstone.

He Certainly Did.

"Adam was a patient man," said the parson. "He never said a word when he was turned out of Eden."

"Mebby he didn't," rejoined Deacon Cobb, "but accordin' to th' records he raised Cain afterwards."

What Would Happen?

Gunner—I see where a New York man has a $10,000 overcoat."

Guyer—Whew! Suppose he should come home some day and discover his wife had given it to a tramp!"

Had No Kick Coming.

"What do you think of the insurance investigation?" asked the privileged friend.

"I have no fault to find with it," answered the humorist. "It is good for at least three jokes and a verselet every week."

Doubtful Testimonial.

Drug Clerk—That middle-aged man who bought a bottle of our famous hair restorer two weeks ago was in again today.

Proprietor—Did he want another bottle?

Drug Clerk—No; he wanted a wig.

HOW HE KNEW.

Biggs—Can you recommend a first-class skin doctor?
Diggs—Yes. Go to Dr. Sokem.
Biggs—Is he a skin specialist?
Diggs—You bet he is. I just got a bill from him this morning.

Foiled Again.

"I'll admit," said Mrs. Hylo, "there are some things I don't know——"

"That's no lie," interrupted her husband. "But," continued the alleged better half of the combination, "that man doesn't live who can tell me what they are."

Cheap Transportation.

"Hah!" exclaimed the poet, as he grasped his fountain pen. "The spirit moves me!"

"That," rejoined the landlady, who was not only willing but anxious to lose him, "beats paying an expressman 50 cents to do the job."

Proposed Amendment Rejected.

"Laura," said Mrs. Ferguson, hurriedly explaining matters in the kitchen, "I did not want to bring the man home to dinner, but he kept staying and staying at the office, and I just had to ask him. You will have to put as good a face on it as you can."

"If you think I'm going to change my face on his account, George Ferguson," said his spouse, red and angry, "you'll have to think again. You may bring him out to dinner right now!"

A Hot Member.

Young Jay Green—I tell ye, Lester Doolittle is a sport fer your life!

Abner Appledry—I ain't noticed it, perticklerly.

Young Jay Green—Ye ain't? Why, whenever a drummer or anybody gives him a ten-cent cigar, he saves the band off'n it, and wears it as long as it holds together on the 0'-cent cigars he buys hisself.

Turning the Laugh on Harold.

"No, Harold," said the fair, proud girl. "I can never be yours!"

"Never!" he cried in anguished tones.

"Never!" she answered coldly.

"Oh, very well," he sneered. "There are others."

"Yes, Harold, I know there are," she said. "And I accepted one of them this afternoon."

His Customary Luck.

Mr. Makinbrakes (determined not to make a blunder this time)—I was delighted with the way in which the little girl recited that selection.

Elderly Matron (one of the guests)—You evidently are under the impression that she is one of my children. She isn't, and I thought her performance was extremely tiresome.

Uses of a Livery

Son—Father, I want to drive to Blank's Corners this afternoon. Do you need the span?

Father—My son, to get to Blank's Corners, and back in time for supper, will require very hard driving. I think it will be wiser to hire a livery horse.

Honesty the Best Policy.

He (trying to play a trump card)—As I passed your house last evening, I thought I heard an altercation.

She (stiffly)—I was at the theater last evening, Mr. Mudhoney, and her twins were at our house, visiting the cook.

Chance for a Jab.

Miss Tartun—Mrs. Upmore has a strange dislike for me.

Miss Jeller—Yes; and she has only the slightest acquaintance with you—that's what makes it seem so strange.

At the Night School.

Teacher—One of the largest metamorphoses in nature, it has always seemed to me, is that of a tadpole turning to a frog.

Shaggy-Haired Pupil—Is it any stranger than a ship turning turtle?

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If you are interested, and time is of any importance, send a postal card for my free book telling stories of my successful men. This is a high class position—one you will be proud to fill. Decide quickly.

Address your reply to Jesse "Person," Manager Sales Department FRED'K RAMS & CO. Dept. 6. Merchants' Gas Building, Chicago.

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OUT OF THE FLAMES;

Or, The Missing Heiress.

BY JEANNE STODDERT.

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CHAPTER X.

"Well, I feel a fit subject for an asylum, myself," said Dud, standing sway and gazing in wonder upon the form which they had just deposited on the bed.

"I feel a bit rattled, too," came from the white lips of Tom.

"Herself for a few moments—her reason returned, clearly, as she recalled the disagreeable scenes of the fire," observed Neil.

"It is too bad that she did not reveal her identity," remarked Tom.

"Oh, I know who she is, all right. That doesn't agitate my mind in the least. Neither does the return of consciousness, which was natural. But her trance condition does. Clearly, she is a medium—has clairvoyant powers. It is the spirit of Lady Jane Grey. I now understand that controls the subjective mind and embodies the seemingly lifeless form at intervals. It is the psychics that now puzzles my mind. How wonderful it is—her telling me what she did about my uncle."

"I thought your uncle was living," replied Dud.

"So he is, or was. By Jove! I feel wrecked about him. Wonder if I could get him by long distance?"

"Gad, but you're nervous! I never saw you like this before, Neil," said Dud.

"Such a phenomenon is quite enough to upset any one," put in Tom.

"It seems strange what she told me about the automobile upset, which seems to have occurred for tomorrow night," observed Neil. "I intended to go, sure enough."

"You don't mean it! Is that right?" eagerly questioned Dud.

"I won't go now," answered Neil.

"Phaw! I guess not, if it's so," said Tom.

"You bet I am," answered Neil, very decidedly.

"Nonsense, there is nothing in it!"

"There is everything in it! We have got to acknowledge the power of spirit in experience," said Neil.

"No, I can't accept it," answered Dud.

"I have heard of these people who cannot trust their eyes, their ears, or any of their senses, in fact," returned Neil.

"Of course, this is a most unusual circumstance," persisted Dud, "but I venture there is nothing about it which science cannot explain."

"I say there is. Science stops at the door of the occult," said Neil, stoutly.

"Well, to show you how little confidence I have in this thing, I'll take your place in the automobile party tomorrow night."

"I intend to warn the boys not to go," said Neil, very seriously.

"They will only laugh at you. It won't stop them. Better not make yourself ridiculous," observed Dud, in disgust.

"I think Neil is dead right. I wouldn't go with that party for all of Rockefeller's coin," now spoke up Tom, "and you should not encourage the other boys to go, Dud."

"I swear, you are both cracked across the upper story," said Dud, in disgust. "I won't feel this way about it tomorrow. Humph! I guess tomorrow is here. Would you believe that it is after one? I am going to roost."

"I am going to try to get my uncle by long distance," said Neil.

"A shame to disturb his slumbers at this unholy hour," said Dud, turning away.

Without replying, Neil started downstairs. "It was surprising—to hear her call your name in that way," called Tom.

Neil turned about and said: "Convincing, I should say. Well, I'll be off. I can further confirm out of this unfortunate circumstance. When partially roused, when her subjective mind is awake, she suffers all that Lady Jane Grey did, previous to being beheaded. Being fully conscious, the horrors of the fire again press upon her memory. It were perhaps better for her to sleep herself to death than to become a howling maniac. Could she exist in this trance-like condition, it wouldn't be so bad. Then it seems that both the subjective and objective minds leave the body. I wonder through what space they wander. I wonder if there can be anything in the revelation which is supposed to come to me?"

"Nothing from that source until you are keyed up to the spiritual. That is rather a high note for one of your earthly tendencies to reach, isn't it, old boy?"

"I suppose it wouldn't hurt my intelligence to investigate these things a little further than I have. I have had a great deal faith in theosophy, spiritualism, and the rest, but my experience of this evening has put me into a reflective and very serious mood. I'll go down to the telephone while you keep an eye on the sleeper. The Lord knows I wish her husband would come back! I would like a shift the responsibility."

Half an hour later, Neil stumbled upstairs, his face as white as his shirt-bosom. "He's dead. My uncle died two hours ago," he gasped, as he sank heavily into a chair.

"You don't mean to say!" exclaimed Tom. "Now let science explain that mes-sage."

"It all convinces me that there is spiritual communication—that the mind, the spirit, lives after death—after leaving the body," murmured Neil. "This is a sad message to have come to the sleeping dame. It seems that a telegram had been sent out at the time I left the house, and over the 'phone, announcing the unwelcome news. I am all broken up."

"You had, of course, best will you do? Go there tomorrow?"

"Yes—leave on the first train. I suppose that I am his only heir and——"

"Did he leave much behind—while?"

"Well, I rather guess—a neat little fortune to one in the ordinary walks of life," answered Neil, with a touch of pride, "you, Neil."

"Thanks—but believe me, I thought a heap of him. He has always treated me pretty white—stepped into the gap when you know—so I feel pretty bad about this. But I must get myself together, as well as a few hours' sleep, to catch the morning train north."

Before leaving, Neil went to Dud and cautioned him about going automobiling that night.

"Well, I'll think about it," laughed Dud. "At least, caution the others. Explain to them this singular——"

"Phaw, it won't make any impression. They will call it a fad, Neil, stoutly, so let it rest. I'll tell them about it."

Upon reaching the hotel, tortured room, Neil hastened to inquire if any message had been left for him by his uncle before he passed away. He was anxious to learn if the message which came to him through clairvoyance had been sent out explained by telepathy. Being told that his relative died peacefully and unconsciously for twenty-four hours before death ensued, strengthened the student's convictions that the spirit had returned from beyond the grave. He was now greatly distressed in fact. He pitied the sad, sad fate of the automobile party. But with so many lives momentarily expected, one circumstance was lost sight of, for the time being. The genuine love and admiration which he had always felt for his uncle who had been both friend and father, now found expression in deep grief.

It was with a heavy heart that he stepped into the train the next day, and here he him back to the city. Before entering the car he bought a Chicago daily, and after settling himself, began the traveler's task of learning the news.

His composure was great as his eye fell upon the bold headlines that chronicled the fate of several motor-boats which had been overtaken by fire. Three killed—I must know who were the unfortunate ones." Again seeking the page that gave the list, heart-breaking it was, he found the names of three of his fellow-students.

"I wonder if he knows?" he mused. "I should have done this myself. It might have averted the shock. Poor, sleeping Beauty, she—she could have saved the lives of all, had they any faith in her. I wonder how she is by this time, or what is to be her fate? I hope it is something better than to become a maniac. I am half inclined to think there may be something in what she said about the revelation that might come to me through spiritual communication. I'll keep it from the boys, but I won't be slow in looking up a medium and seeing what there is in this. It might be worth while trying for a time, of rousing her from this state of stupor. Jupiter! I wonder if her presence in the house has been detected during my absence Dud's experience has opened the door to strangers—to visitors. There is no telling what may not be unearthed by this time."

CHAPTER XI.

It was with great anxiety that an hour later the overburdened student sprang up the steps to his home.

"I was just wishing that you would come in on this train," was his greeting from Tom. "I suppose you know about the accident. Horrible affair! I regret that I did not go and speak to the boys about this—this experience of yours the other night and try to convince them."

"How is Dud? In a pretty bad way?"

"Oh, no. So-so. But, he is all in, but I guess he'll get along all right. You know he has some heart trouble, and I feared the shock would prove too much for him at first, but he'll be himself in a day or two."

"Guess I'll run up and take a look at him."

"Perhaps you had better wait awhile. He is sleeping now."

"How about the—the other one?"

"Who? The 'Sleeping Beauty?' She has not budged nor blinked since you left."

"Then her presence here has not been discovered?"

"No. She has lain shut up in the back room, as she was when you left."

"Is she just the same as when I left?"

"Why, I think her pulse is not quite so strong."

"What do you think about having Dr. Watson come in and look at her? I wish her husband would come back. I swear I don't know what to do. It seems we should not let her lie like this, if there is anything known to science that will bring her out of it."

"I fear that her mind is deranged for all time."

"Yes, that is the trouble. It might be more merciful if you would permit her to die death. That is the end, if she continues in this way."

"Well, that is not a matter for us to decide. The thing for us to do is to bring her back to life, and restore her to the rest of her life, why, that is not our affair."

"Perhaps you are right, Neil."

"Look here, Neil, it strikes me that you are very tender of this woman. I believe that if you would permit us to experiment a little further we might——"

"Not in the least. I have cold-blooded wretches would have killed her long ago by placing a hand on her heart or pulse. Well, perhaps her husband is back by this time. I'll call up and see. I think that I should like to have him take the responsibility which we are shouldering."

"Ahem! Well, I'll be hanged. Neil, that you are all wrong. It matters not what course is taken and you know it. I insist it is none other than Pauline Darkness. I looked up a history of her case for worse than this one, or beyond all reasonable doubt, and found that I made a mistake of this sort. It is blamed mystifying, though. I'll confess that I am at sea. Then I went upstairs to look after the one now under discussion.

"Dud was sleeping, stretched out upon the bed, as white, as cold-looking, and as motionless as a corpse. I put his head to listen to the heart-beat.

"Still a very irregular pulse." he murmured. For a time he stood studying the features of the beautiful woman as one would study a picture.

"Well, blamed if I know which one it is! Dud, Tom, or Pauline Darkness. I don't know. I'll go look in on Dud, then his myself down to Hazleton's office. My brain is in a whirl—positively reeling."

He found Dud, who was now awake, lying as was left him, and greeted him, thus:

"Hello, old boy," said Neil, tenderly raising Dud's head and placing on the cover-let. "I am decidedly glad to find you alive. Feeling any stronger by this time?"

Dud replied in a weak voice.

Feeling his pulse, Neil continued: "You will be all right in a few days. Just rest to yourself to talk. It will take complete rest to bring you around, you know. I think, however, that you need a better tonic."

"I have been a cursed fool," whimpered Dud.

"Well, it isn't difficult to come to such a conclusion," answered Neil. "There are times in life when we are all forced to come to such a pass—conclusion. I'll order a stimulant and be off. Some presents a weakness on hand. Go to sleep, Dud, old boy, and I'll ascertain the identity of the woman upstairs. This must be settled beyond any further question."

"It is the heiress," murmured Dud.

"I hope to God it is! But we shall soon know. Now, Dud, you must not have the right to detain her any longer, whatever come to us. I can't think that we will come in much touch with her, after snatching, for once, must be looked upon as a charge of twelve dollars for services, and have its reward. There are very few instances when it shouldn't have, to my way of thinking. I am sure science can have my carcass to carve, any time that I am through with it. But try to cheer up a bit, Dud, and whatever you do, receive no callers. I shall tell Tom to admit no one."

"Phaw! That doesn't matter."

"Look here, Dud, I am going to take charge of you and you have got to obey my commands, for once. I say no visitors this day!"

"Send up the morning papers," weakly called Dud, as Neil turned to leave the room.

"You have had excitement enough for the present. But I will keep them all until you are stronger."

"You're a knave!" said Dud, smiling faintly.

It was with more or less trepidation that Neil now hurried on down to the lawyer's office, but he was anxious to get through with so disagreeable a task.

"Hazleton in?" he asked of the stenographer, as he stepped into the reception room, off which are the consulting, or private offices, of half a dozen struggling lawyers.

When, a moment later, Neil faced the one of whom he was in quest, he hesitated to introduce the subject.

"What can I do for you, my friend? I learned that you had called during my absence," said the lawyer, after the usual courtesies had been exchanged.

"We shall come to that pretty soon," answered Neil. "I understand that you were called hack by the serious illness of your mother."

"I have just returned from burying her," answered the attorney.

"Is that so? Well, I had hoped that you would be more fortunate. It seems you are having more than your share of trouble at the present moment. Excuse me for such a manner; then this affliction coming so soon after."

"Yes, yes! It gives color to the old adage that troubles are generally in pairs," said the lawyer, averting his gaze as he tapped nervously on the arm of his chair.

"Do you think there is a possible chance of your having made a mistake in identifying the body of your mother?" questioned Neil.

"Why, what do you mean?" gasped the lawyer as he went white and sank lower into the chair.

"I mean just what I asked. Could there be any mistake as to——"

"Mistake! Sacrilege!" exclaimed the lawyer, now springing up. "Tell me, at once, way you have asked the question."

"I will in a moment. Sit down and calm yourself, sir. I have some important——"

"Well, out with it at once! I demand to know!"

"Then, I have this to say. If it were your wife whom you buried, would you not be willing to tell me a startling revelation. She is not dead."

"My God! I have been recognized by some one in the West. I feared this," was the answer that came from the lips of the struggled to calm himself. "Nonsense!" he said aloud. "Of course she is dead. You know that. Didn't I see her body lowered into the grave? Didn't I——"

"Oh, pardon me, but do you know there are instances where people have been buried alive? I am a student, and should know. You can guess the rest. We stole the body from the grave. It came to life. Now you have seen Neil with his dramatic emphasis.

"Is she also dead?" muttered the whitefaced attorney, as he tremblingly grasped a chair to support himself into it. he continued. "Such news must naturally upset one considerably."

"Yes, sir, it would, I should say, considerably," returned Neil. "I expected to see you overcome with joy, instead of with grief. Joy. That is why I preferred to reach the climax gradually."

As the man sat back in his chair, staring at him in a dazed sort of way, Neil found that he could not proceed with the melodramatic emphasis.

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"I am terribly upset—terribly upset by the news you have given me," said the lawyer, at length, after taking a generous swallow of the flask to Neil, after taking a generous swallow. "So she lives? My wife really lives? It is hard for me to realize my head!"

"Well, yes, she lives—in a way. At times, though, she is apparently dead—most of the time. She has recovered her reason at times, and the rest was for only a few moments."

"That confounded nurse buried her alive!" thought Hazleton. But now breathing a bit easier, he said quite calmly: "Is she deranged, or what?"

"I think so."

"Then she should be put in an asylum," answered the lawyer, with prompt decision. He was a rare of how to get rid of her in such an arrangement might still hide his crime from the world.

"No doubt that is what it will come to. I am more than sorry to tell you, Hazleton. The situation is as it is, and cannot be altered, but——"

"Then perhaps she won't live, after all," the attorney quickly interrupted, with a pronounced brightening of the features.

"Damned if she don't look like a cold-blooded brute wishes that she would die," thought Neil, as he looked at the overjoyed maniac that my fancy pictured."

"I think she will live if we can bring her out of this deathlike state. I am not that the question is, would it be merciful to prescribe her if she will make of her a suffering and raving madwoman? That question you must decide. She is your wife, you know."

"Yes, yes, of course the decision should rest with me," quickly replied the lawyer, as his mind on the alert. "So I have a still better chance of escape!" he confided to himself. "If she were dead to be buried to death, of course!"

After sitting with thoughtful brow for a few moments, Hazleton resumed:

"Well, yes—I should prefer to have her dead, any hour, rather than shut up in a madhouse. What man wouldn't? In the end, this is all it can come to, likely, and she would be saved years of suffering."

"Yes, that is all true. It is a serious matter to decide, however," said Neil. "To let her sleep on, undisturbed, means certain

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death, while in resuscitating her there is a chance—just a mere chance—that with health her reason might return."

"Well, it is too important a matter to decide hastily," replied the lawyer, his courage partially returning. "I shall have to take a little time to consider what is best to do. You—that is, you think there is no chance in the world of her coming out of this state naturally?"

As Neil shook his head very positively, the lawyer drew another breath of relief.

"Suppose you come with me, now, and identify her and sign the papers," suggested Neil. "There is some question in the minds of my two accomplices in this—this steal, as to who she really is. They swear that it is the living image of the missing heiress, Pauline Hazleton."

"What! You say she—she——"

The lawyer, who had half risen from his chair, got no farther. He sank back, white and trembling.

CHAPTER XII.

"Here, take another swig," said Neil, approaching the flask. "No doubt, having been through such trying scenes of late has unnerved you considerably."

"I—I—no! I must nerve myself," thought the lawyer, as he eagerly seized the bottle. "I'll all up! I fear it is all up with me—to the pen I go!"

"You see the strong resemblance between the two?" questioned Neil.

"Oh, yes, yes—I—indeed, there was! He has often been remarked. But there can be no possible mistake of this sort," replied the cringing old lawyer, who knew for whom I buried. I identified her fully. So we did not take the keeper. They did look strange—my wife and this—this Miss Harkness. But to reassure myself that there could be no mistake of this kind, I will go at once with you to where you have her confined. For if any unfortunate is not in my w—then Laura must still live—must be alive, somewhere! I shall not be slow in turning over heaven and earth to find her!"

"Yes, that is what I expected to have you do. Return with me to the house, and let us know, beyond any doubt, it it be your wife. See clearly whether she has not her face, so there can be no chance of a mistake," replied Neil, as he rose and turned to go.

"Good God! What a fix for a fellow to be in!" thought Hazleton, as the two hurried along. "Plainly, I have got to swear that it is my wife I identify—and that is the only thing that I can do. Of course it is up to me to do with her what I wish. I had to be a confederate criminal in my own sight, or a worse one than I am, but what can I do? I am in a bad box—in a bad box! Confound that housekeeper! I wish I had not had the brilliant idea of her! To be sure, the insurance money comes in pretty handy, but there is something else worth living for in this world besides money. Money—what a tempter. What a devil money is, anyhow! It is the eagerness to secure this that makes the liar, the hypocrite, the thief, the murderer! Nearly all the trouble in the world can be checked up to this pursuit. Before I get through with this affair I shall probably have the choice of blowing out my brains or putting the best years of my life as a convict labor! I am fortunate in one thing, and that is—a woman's condition. Glad if she had regained her reason, then I would have had the devil to pay! Clearly, I must take possession. I wonder what I had better do with her. She'll never die—she's a cat! She had been killed twice already. To place her in an asylum might mean a secret, while to leave her in her present state, and try to hide her away, will naturally create suspicion. Unless I can keep those students quiet concerning the matter, the case will attract the attention of the whole medical profession. I can't decide which is the best to do. I know this, though I have got to take possession. I don't see how in thunder I am ever going to get West in time for the operation! Laura will take on like everything if I am not there, and to explain matters would throw her into the rabies! Perhaps I can arrange to have wife number two still secreted with the students for a time—until I can run out there and back. I must be with Laura at the time of the operation!"

Reaching this conclusion, the distracted man searched his mind vigorously, then said:

"My poor wife, from what you tell me, must be in a most peculiar state. Her condition must be of unusual and great interest to you medical students."

"Yes, indeed, in more ways than one," returned Neil. "I shall want to watch her closely until the end, whatever it may be."

"I shall see to it that you do not, my young man!" Hazleton quickly told himself.

"Does any one outside of you three know of this affair?" questioned the attorney.

"No, indeed! We have kept it dark. We do not relish the idea of being written up as body-snatchers. In this instance, it was a merciful deed, though. You look upon it so, Mr. Hazleton?"

"Yes! Oh, yes—certainly!" answered the lawyer, with a mental reservation. "But I was going to ask. Do you not find it difficult to keep the matter quiet? When she becomes lively is how you are running grave chances of discovery."

"Of course we got to manage. They—some of the boys—know that a woman is housed with us, but think it is a sister to me. I let us know if she reported dangerously ill."

"It must prove a great annoyance, though —her presence there, I mean. She must necessarily require much attention."

"Oh, yes, certainly, she has been a care, in a way, for we have left nothing undone to restore her health and mind. Still, as you say, it is an interesting case, an unusually interesting case," added Neil, thinking especially of the woman's medimistic powers.

"If she continues quiet, you may not mind keeping her on there for a week or so, while I make a business trip West," tentatively remarked the lawyer. "I am sure that she is in excellent hands and much better off than in a hospital or asylum. Of course I shall be only too glad to make a handsome return for the obligation."

"Well, I think that arrangement would suit the other boys all right. College boys are, of course, always hard up. Then, as you say, we are profiting by the study of her condition."

Congratulating himself upon his success of this arrangement, the lawyer now sought relief in another direction.

"So you think there is little chance of her awakening to rational mind?"

"Just one chance in a hundred!" emphatically replied Neil.

"Well, I swear, I don't know what to do. It seems a crime to be instrumental in making of one a miserable mania—if she seem to suffer greatly when rouse."

"Great Scott! I would say so! Imagine she is Lady Jane Grey, trying to hide from Queen Mary, who had her executed, you know."

"Oh, my poor wife! My poor wife!" moaned Hazleton. "It were better had she died—far better. Better that she had not been re—lifted, since in all probability she would soon passed peacefully from sleep to [illegible]"

"That is a matter not easy to d— returned Neil, a bit put out. "If I had buried alive I think I should be very grateful to any one that dug me up and gave me another chance at life, no difference what my condition."

"Perhaps you are right, my friend. Understand, I am finding no fault with you. I am only thinking of my poor wife's protonged suffering. We bring her back to to the question as to whether it is best to try to bring her out of this state of coma."

"Well, it is up to you to decide that, Mr. Hazleton."

"But you must have an opinion in the matter. Please let me hear what it is."

"Well, I believe if it were my wife I should hope for the one chance that her reason might be eventually restored, and do all that I could to break up this prolonged slumber."

"I—I hardly agree with you," replied [illegible] same time feeling impelled to [illegible] "God knows there isn't anything that I would not do that I could, without injury of my wrong," he decided mentally, "but it seems that my hands are tied. I am becoming through force of circumstances a low and cunning criminal."

CHAPTER XIII.

Arriving at the house, Neil led the way to the back chamber where the stranger lay stretched upon the bed.

Steeling himself for the ordeal, Hazleton stepped into the room, glanced quickly at the young girl, and said:

"My wife without a doubt."

Neil had hoped, for reasons best known to himself, that this would not be the fact.

"Are you positive? Are there no marks about the body by which you might identify her beyond all doubt? Something stronger than a facial resemblance? That is something [illegible] with you. A mole, [illegible] birth-mark, or [illegible] Why, no one glance into her face he could distinguish her from every other woman in the universe. When placed side by side, there is found only a slight resemblance between the two that are supposed to look so much alike. This is always the case. The Creator was certainly original in His formation of individuals. No two under the face of the heavens look precisely the same. But to continue. You say that this is my wife, you will find a mole, in the shape of an eagle, on her left shoulder."

This mark he remembered the housekeeper's calling his attention to. "It is one who does not observe that mark, it is all up with us," she had said, when bathing the patient.

"I will locate it for you," said the lawyer. "That is unnecessary. We have noticed it," said Neil. "I guess she must belong to you, but I cannot agree with you, Mr. Hazleton, in thinking that two beings look [illegible] the same. Here, look at this photograph," he continued, taking one from the dresser [illegible] "Who did you procure [illegible] picture?" asked the attorney.

"Why, a friend—no one who was well acquainted with the girl in life."

The lawyer's hand trembled visibly as he returned the card.

"It certainly does resemble my poor Laura," he said. "Still, I can see no differences that a stranger would not.

"My poor girl! My unfortunate girl," he gasped, now stepping to where she lay. He caressed the cheek of the beautiful face a moment, then hid his face in his hands. "To see her like this unnerves me," he moaned. "It is more than I can bear—more than I can bear!"

Regaining his grief, the students turned [illegible] the lawyer murmured [illegible] like brailing myself! I envy the woman her condition!"

The two students spent in serious thought, he called to the students, saying that he wished to make arrangements for them to keep his wife a few days longer. This agreed to, Neil said:

"Now, my friend, we decided about trying to revive her."

"I shall have to trust to the gods to keep both in my body, without any further [illegible] until I return," answered Hazleton. "I must have the opinion of the best experts that I can find on it—pity, before deciding to bring her out of the—"

This had the effect of silencing Neil, as he intended it should.

"Of course I do not wish to involve you young men further than is necessary, and before this examination takes place I must have her removed from here. Don't you think that, with the proper nourishment, you can keep her alive for a week or so."

"That is a pretty hard question to decide, Mr. Hazleton," replied Neil, as he stood [illegible] the man before him. "What is our idea? To merely keep the flame of life flickering until you get back? Or shall we do our utmost to restore her physically and mentally?"

"I wish to be clearly understood upon this point," returned the lawyer, somewhat excitedly. "I do not want my wife tampered with, by way of experiment. Only the most talent should handle a case like this. To keep life in the body is all that I require of you."

"That may not be an easy thing to do," returned Neil, coldly. "She might reach such a low ebb that it would require heroic measures to bring her out of it."

"Well, in that event, it were really best to let nature take its course. You must understand how I feel about this, since I have spoken of it before. She is better off [illegible] dead, and the chances are that she [illegible] state she will be in, should she be restored to us. The present one, I feel positive that the insanity specialists will say but what you do, my friend—that the mind can never be restored."

"Still, they would hardly agree [illegible] thinking that property, [illegible] has the right to deny a [illegible] that might possibly [illegible]

"So is my wife!" declared the l— "If I decide that it is more [illegible] for her to sleep on quietly until death comes her, than to live, for years, perhaps, suffering the tortures damned, I say it is my right, and no interference with! These men [illegible] legal position argue on a professional standpoint, as [illegible] their dope and surgical instruments, not the heart [illegible] They all become a pack of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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FROM BACKWOODS TO BOULEVARD;

How a Brave Boy Fought His Way Into the Business World.

BY GEORGE WEYWOUTH.

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

Before either of us got seriously hurt, however, a big crowd began to gather round us, and the fellow broke away and fell back a step or two, glaring at me.

Then a policeman came, and my lawyer friend tried to run away, but the officer got him.

"What's the matter here?" he asked.

"I don't know what's the matter, officer," the fellow broke in glibly. "I was going along here as peaceable as could be and this Rube jumped onto me."

"That's about the fourth time I've been called Rube since last night, and, I'm getting tired of it," I declared. At this the crowd laughed, and even the austere policeman grinned. I remembered the line of the song, and began to understand, for the first time, that Rube was a common name for a country boy.

"What did you jump on this fellow for?" demanded the blue-coat.

"Because he jumped onto me."

I guess I'll take you both to the station. You can explain your troubles to the judge. He'll make you both jump in the other direction.

"All right," said I. "That's where I had started, anyway. I'm a detective agent a wolf named Slim Jim. He tried to rob me last night and I was called to be there at last night and I was called to be there at ten o'clock. This fellow says the case is already settled. He says he is Slim Jim's lawyer, but he doesn't hardly come up to my idea of what a lawyer ought to be."

"Oh, that's the way of it?" The policeman looked keenly at my lawyer companion, who shifted his feet about nervously, but said nothing.

It was ten o'clock when we got to the police court.

"There's Slim Jim, now," I said, pointing to where he sat in the prisoner's dock. "I guess this lawyer was mistaken about his case being called at that hour."

"Ah, he ain't no lawyer," laughed the policeman. "He's Mikey Pehan, alias Slim Jim, who you have come here as complaint against him for assault."

"Oh, no; let him alone," I said. "If he's Jim's partner, I don't blame him so much for what he did."

Then came out o' here, Mr. Pehan, before the judge sees you," said the officer, rather hurly. "Get him out o' here, yours, I'll warrant, an' if he gets a sight of it, you'll sure get a sentence."

Mr. Pehan evidently thought this was good advice, for as soon as the policeman got his back turned he slipped out through the crowd and was gone.

I waited around for a while, and it was pitiful to see the despair of justice in the face of Slim Jim's lawyer friend. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, I'll let you go this time. There must be some mistake in the case. There must be some misunderstanding. Mr. Pehan, Mr. Pehan, where are you?" and the lawyer looked around for the vanished client.

When Slim Jim's case was called he had a real lawyer there to represent him. A continuance was prayed for an some technical ground that I couldn't understand, and the case was put off for thirty days and the case was put off for thirty days and he was duly notified to appear.

When I got out of the court room I found my policeman still at my elbow.

"Looky here, young man," said he, "I thought I'd better give you a tip. Are you going to remain in town?"

"If I can get a job."

"Well, you want to watch out for the Slim Jim crowd. They'll sling you some night if they get a chance, an' I wouldn't put it a bit past them to stick a knife into you."

"What'll they do that for?"

"Because if they get rid of you there won't be anybody to prosecute the case, see?"

I could see, and I thanked the officer and went back to the Wolf House. The day clerk was on duty.

"Darrell has gone home," said he. "He told me about you. He said he would engage that room, and Mrs. Berg will be waiting for you."

"I guess I'll go on out there now," said I. "But say, you needn't publish it in the newspapers where I'm going to stop. I'm not going to hide myself from anybody, but you know Slim Jim?"

"Yes," he laughed. "I heard about that."

"Well, his case has been put off for thirty days, and they are likely to try to get rid of the witness. Understand—and I'm the witness."

"I'm wise, all right, Rube. But if you want to dodge that case, which will be just the simplest thing to do, you may authorize me to tell them you won't prosecute, and I'll fix it up for you. Some of them will be around here. They'll bail Jim out, and that's all there'll be to it."

I thought for a minute and then shook my head. Some native obstinacy impelled me to go on. I just had thrown himself on the mercies I might have let him off, but I couldn't bear to yield to a threat. "No; I mean to stand down," I said. "If I'm alive, and don't change my mind, I'll be in court."

"Well, I admire your pluck," said the day clerk.

I found my way rather more easily than I expected to Cottage Grove avenues and Thirty-seventh street. Berg was glad to see me, and I paid a week's board in advance, and unstrapped my new trunk brought out. I was duly installed as a resident of the big town.

CHAPTER IV.

"SEARCHLIGHTS."

At the proper time that afternoon I went to hunt up Mr. Reginald. I found the Bender-Hall block a huge structure filled with offices—a place fifteen stories high, where people went up and down in elevators.

I got in one of the cages and showed the fellow my card.

"Mr. Reginald is up there now," said he. "Get off at the ninth floor and go to room nine hundred and twelve."

I found the place without any difficulty and at the door was the inscription: Civilization. George Baxter, Arthur Reginald. There was a clerk's desk in what sort of business it was.

When I looked at the door it was opened by an impish boy. He looked as if he might be about fourteen, but small for his age.

"Mr. Baxter in?" I asked. "I don't want to knock on an office door. Just open it up and come right in."

I took him by the ear and lifted him off his feet.

"I'm getting sick of this Rube business," said I. "I want to see Mr. Reginald."

"Ouch," he whimpered. "I got a photy-graft of you sellin' Searchlights." He was grinning again, having got out of my reach.

He led the way into a good sized room, where I found Mr. Reginald with his feet on the desk, and smoking a black cigar.

There was another man at another desk. He was in his shirt sleeves and was working industriously at some papers and smoking a cigar, also. I noticed immediately that the smoke smelled differently than it did at the Wolf House.

"Hello, Reginald," said Mr. Reginald, genially. "What's the matter with your eye? Been having a fight?"

"Yes, sir; I've had two fights already, and more in prospect."

"Mr. Baxter, this is my friend, Ben Strong," said Mr. Reginald.

The other man laid down his work and grunted at me, somewhat crossly I thought.

"What can I do for you, Strong?" said Mr. Reginald, motioning me to a chair. They both leaned back and smoked and listened patiently while I related my experiences at the hotel and at the police court.

"Scrappy, exclaimed Mr. Reginald, when I was through. "Didn't I tell you the boy had good stuff in him?"

"He's scrappy all right," acknowledged Mr. Baxter. "But can he sell books. That's what I want to know."

"Any scrappy man can sell books," said Mr. Reginald, positively.

"He's mighty young," objected the other.

"It's a fault that time will cure all too rapidly."

"And he's as green as they make them."

"All the more apt to take hold seriously," argued Mr. Reginald. "I'll go bail for him."

It was embarrassing to have them talk about me that way—as though I was some sort of live stock—right before my face.

"Here, Mr. What's-your-name? Ben Strong, here, take this set of books in there and look them over, and when you've made up your mind what you think of them come back and tell us. I want talk to Reginald now."

Having thus addressed me, Mr. Baxter piled some heavy volumes on my arm and pushed me through a door marked "private" into another room, closing the door behind me.

I saw the three volumes were entitled "Searchlights of Civilization." Here, then, the mystery was solved. I sat down by the window and looked them over. I had never cared especially for books, and what I didn't know about those "Searchlights" after half an hour's study would have been very amusing to the editor. But the pictures were nice, and I gathered that the books were compiled from many different sources. I found "Washington's Address to His Army," "Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg," and other fifth reader favorites that were familiar even to me.

"Well, what have you found out?" asked Mr. Baxter, after a little, when I went back to where he and Mr. Reginald were still waiting.

"There's a hundred and twelve pictures, two hundred and forty-five pages and twelve fly leaves in the three volumes," said I.

"Ph'm," he grunted.

"I have made calculate the set weighs about fifteen pounds," I added. "And I think they are very nice."

"Do you think they ought to sell pretty well at fifteen dollars, Ben?" he asked.

"A man couldn't sell a set of them to me for fifteen dollars," I blurted out. "Not unless he would rob me more than I can."

"Have you got fifteen dollars, Ben?"

"No, sir."

"Well, now, look here. This is just the set of books that a man has a right to make his way in life. I'd like to show them to you in detail," he began, and Mr. Reginald threw down his feet and let Mr. Baxter continued to explain the beauties of the books.

He told me how many thousand dollars it cost to make the pictures, and how much art was encompassed between the covers. He told me a whole lot of things.

I knew inside of fifteen minutes that those books were all right. Within half an hour I was unalterably convinced and life would not be worth living unless I had a set of them.

But I did not give me a chance to say a word, but when he looked around at last and saw me taking off my shoe he stopped suddenly and explained:

"Why, what are you doing?"

"I'm going down into my sock," said I. "I've got my money there for fear of losing it."

"Well, what do you want with money?"

"I want to buy a set of your books," said I.

He laughed and threw the third volume back on the desk with the other two.

"I don't want to sell them to you, Ben," he said, waving his hand. I noticed that the sweat was pouring off of him.

"I just needed to show you that a man can sell another man a set of these books, even if the other man has no money at all. I suppose, now, that if you were selling them and a person should say he wouldn't buy these unless you would let him have it that you would give up and go away and let him alone."

"I see the point, sir."

"And do you want to go to work for us?"

"Can I earn twelve hundred dollars besides my keep in two years?"

"Well, sir, we've been talking it over and we've decided to make you an offer of that kind."

"I'll accept it, sir."

"You are to have expense money—enough for board and clothes and incidentals—but not a cent of salary until the end of the two years. Then you get the whole sum at once."

"That just suits me, sir."

"I want you to understand one thing," he began, slowly. "you won't be worth ten cents to us for a month or two, certainly. We've got to put you through a course of training. You'll have the headache and heartache, time and again, before you get to the point of success. We don't want to bother with you if you're going to 'lay down' on us."

"Mr. Baxter's motto is, 'it's better to fall down than to lie down,' sir. I'll agree to lie down."

"H'm," said he. "Agreements are easy to make. But we are taking all the chances. We're out our money, and you may have nothing to lose. However, we'll execute a contract with you. For two years you are to work for us—go wherever we send you and do whatever we order. You to have expense money as you go along, and your salary at the end of the term. And if you quit us before the two years are up, you don't get a cent. You forfeit what you may have already earned."

"I'll sign that contract, Mr. Baxter."

"You may inquire at the Lake National bank and find out if we are responsible before you sign."

"I know, or think I know, that you are

all right, sir. But I'll just inquire, in order to be sure, I can't afford to take any chances with father's farm, sir."

"All right, Ben, go on out, now, and visit with Reginald. He's off duty at present. Go down to the bank at 10 o'clock tomorrow and make your inquiries, and then come up here and we'll have your contract ready to sign."

He turned to his desk and went to work again, and I went out and left him.

My head was all in a whirl. If things kept happening to me for the next two years as rapidly as they had for the past twenty-four hours, I would acquire experience, even if I didn't get any money.

CHAPTER V.

I DRESS UP.

"Did you make a deal with the old man?" asked Reginald, whom I met in the outer office.

"Yes; I've enlisted for two years, or during the war. When may I go to work, and what shall I do?"

"One thing at a time, Ben. In the first place, you've got to have some clothes."

"Clothes," I exclaimed. "Why, this suit is brand new. I paid twelve dollars for it at Haley's store last spring."

"Twelve dollars? They look every cent of it." His eyes were criticising. "Come with me, Ben."

We took the elevator to the fourth floor of the building, where we found a tailor's shop. Mr. Reginald inspected the goods, and finally picked out a piece.

"I think this will make up well, Ben."

"How much will a suit of this be?" I asked of the tailor, who was hovering around me with a tape-line.

"Forty-five dollars," said he, without so much as a quiver of his eyelids.

Forty-five dollars! And it was just a common looking piece of mixed gray, while the suit I had from Haley's had a red silk stripe in it. I called Mr. Reginald aside.

"All right, go ahead," said I. "If you bankrupt Searchlights I can't help it, but I'll tell you in advance that my own capital won't last long at this rate."

"Where are you going to live? At the Wolf House?"

"No, indeed. But the night clerk there, Otto, sent me a decent sort of fellow, boards with Mrs. Berg, at Thirty-sixth street and Cottage Grove. I've paid a week's board there."

"That's a passable neighborhood. It won't hurt you to stay there awhile," he said. "And now, let us go out and get some trimmings for that new suit."

We went first to a trunk store, where, under his guidance, I bought a twelve dollar suit case. He paid for it. At another store I bought shirts, collars and neckwear, and still another I paid five dollars for a hat, and a like sum for a pair of shoes at still another place.

His recklessness with money amazed me, and I soon saw it was no use to protest. Indeed, the excitement of spending went to my head like wine, and by the time we had finished the rounds I was completely fitted out. I was prepared for anything. If he had said, "come on, Ben, let's buy the Palmer House," I wouldn't have said a word.

He seemed to take it for granted that I was going to succeed with "Searchlights of Civilization," and his confidence was catching. I came to the conclusion—and perhaps he was working to that end—that nothing was too good for a Searchlights young man.

He had all our purchases sent "special" to my boarding place, and when I got home that night I found them waiting for me—all but the suit, which, of course, would not be finished for several days.

But I brushed up the old suit the next morning, and put on the new hat, shoes and linen, and by the time I had a haircut I felt like a different boy.

He whipped out a pistol and fired.

"Look here," I remonstrated. "Are you not going too fast? I'm not Willy Waldorf Astor. I'm not a duke."

"Oh, yes you are, Ben." he smiled. "You are a regular bowling swell, only you have a little slow in finding it out."

"But I can't afford to pay a price like that for a suit of clothes," I protested.

Of course you can't. We understand that. And you can't afford to do without them. So what are you going to do about it?"

"Why, I'm—"

"Shut up, Ben Strong," he interrupted genially—so genially that no one could have taken offense. Then he turned to the tailor.

"Measure him up for a suit of this, Al," he commanded, and the tailor got busy with his tape line.

I stood there feeling very foolish, and looking the same way, no doubt. It seemed an outrageous price to pay for a suit of clothes, but I had surrendered to Mr. Reginald, and the responsibility was his. I determined not to use my precious money to spend on them, and if it was a part of my expense account the "searchlight" and the tailor could settle it between them.

"Charge them to Benjamin Strong, Al," he said, when the measurements were completed. "He's a friend of mine, and he's all right. Rush your best work on them, and bump them along. We'll want a fall suit and an overcoat after a little."

"You mustn't get the idea in your head that I want you to be extravagant," said Mr. Reginald when we got outside. "I don't. You must save your money, like a good fellow, if you are going to pay off that mortgage."

"This is a funny way to begin saving, it seems to me."

"Oh, you've got to have clothes, Ben. And the Haley kind of clothes, while very desirable and suitable at Haleyville, are not up to the standard here. You'll find that out after awhile. At present you must submit to my judgment."

"You look better already, Ben," he declared, when he met me at the office. "You'll find that people won't treat you 'Rube' any more. You don't realize the importance of it, yet, but the practiced eye classifies men by their clothes and manner. And the wearing of good clothes gives you a good manner. They make for morality. A man that is really well-dressed thinks too much of himself to be guilty of little degraded meannesses that sometimes come too easy to a slouchy fellow. You know something about horses, Ben."

"I've had handling horses all my life." I wondered what horses had to do with the subject in hand.

"Then you've probably seen many an old mangy beast, with his mane matted and his tail full of cockle-burrs, hitched up with a rope harness?"

"Oh, yes; I've seen that kind."

"And you've doubtless seen the other kind, the shiny, well-kept horse that arched his neck so proudly and strained at his silver mounted harness? Of course you have, and you know how much better a thoroughbred looks than a scrub."

I began to see the application.

"Well, you're a thoroughbred, Ben. I could see that, even through the Rube outfit. And then, I've seen you at your best. Most people in this busy age, especially when you deal with strangers, only look at you once. They form their opinion of you while you go at that. I want you to be proud, Ben—in a way—confident. And with confidence comes confident. If you are the thoroughbred the Searchlights take you for you won't be a fool just because you are fixed up a little. Now, I'm not going to preach to you any more."

Mr. Reginald, what made do it?" I asked. "I've been wondering about it all night. What made you do it?"

He smiled, and I saw that he knew what I meant. He always took your meaning. I am fortunate in having an intuition about some things. I can tell when a man is

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lying to me; when he's planning treachery—when he's to be trusted. It is a gift. But Mr. Regnald is a perfect wonder that way. He carries it so far that sometimes he seems to be a mind-reader.

"You want to know what made me do it, Ben? Well, I'll tell you. We have an awful lot of trouble in getting good agents. There are only three men in a thousand that can sell books successfully, and two of them won't do it. All the book publishers are after that thousandth man. He must have peculiar temperament and peculiar training. I've long held that I could take a young man—if I could find the right one—the one with the temperament—and train him to the business. The old man agreed to let me try the experiment. I've been looking for the right boy for a year."

"I hope you've found him," I muttered.

"That still doesn't answer your question, Ben. You want to know why I selected you?"

"That's what I'm wondering, sir."

"Well, we will say it was a mere impulse—a whim. I was drawn to you. I figure it like this: That quality in you that attracted me will attract others. You have the success endowment. You are what men call lucky. Just think how things are coming your way! A hundred thousand country boys will come to the city without friends or introductions, and not one of them will find his prospects as good as yours."

"I guess that's so," I reflected.

"Well," growled Mr. Baxter, who had just come in and had evidently heard the latter part of our conversation, "you'll not call yourself so lucky by the time I get through with you. Come on in here, I want to give you a lesson in the diabolical art of selling books."

I followed him meekly into his private room, and he spent two long hours instructing me in the work. He was as gruff as Mr. Regnald was genial, but I soon found out this gruffness was more assumed than real. It was a part of his business to intimidate the agents.

"Now go down to the bank and make your inquiries about us, Ben," he said. "While you are gone I'll have the stenographer draw up a contract. Go on with you, now."

The cashier of the bank smiled, when I finally found him and asked him my question.

"The Searchlight Company is rated at fifty thousand dollars," he said. "They have kept an account here for a number of years. I should say it is one of the straightest and most prosperous book publishing houses in the city. Of course they might fail inside of two years, but I don't thing there's any danger of that. If I were you I shouldn't hesitate."

This formality being settled, I went back and signed the contract. I was now fairly launched in the book business, and anxious to try my mettle.

But Mr. Baxter kept drilling me day after day, and would not let me attempt salesmanship. I got his "canvass"—as he called it—so thoroughly memorized that he sometimes had me teach it to other new agents, and I could rattle it off as easily as I could say the alphabet. I had no doubt that I could sell hundreds of sets of books, and was anxious to get in the field.

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE.

It was three or four days before I saw my friend Darrell, the day clerk, and by that time my new suit was finished. He looked at me in a puzzled way when I met him in the hall.

"Blame if you don't look familiar," said he, "but I don't remember where I saw you."

"It seems to me that you forget your friends pretty soon, Mr. Darrell. How are the wolves at the Wolf House?"

"Great Scott, if it isn't you! Why, you look like a national banker." He walked around me and inspected me from head to foot. "I'll never call another fellow Rube as long as I live," he declared. "It's only a matter of a few clothes, and there you are. Did you connect with the Searchlight people?"

"Yes; I've signed a two years' contract."

"How much do you get?"

"I can afford to pay $45 for a summer suit," I replied.

"I wish I could have a little piece of luck," he sighed. "I get my litle old twelve dollars a week and I won't ever get any more, unless I can make a pick-up on the races. I'll do that, sometime, you see if I don't."

He had forgotten his hard luck now, and his words were eager and confidential.

"Say," he continued, "I came pretty near landing a 'parlay' yesterday. I got three out of four, and the last horse fell down and broke his leg, or I'd 'a' had $900. I've got another good thing on for tomorrow. They broke me yesterday, or I'd make a good clean-up. If you've got ten dollars to spare I can make it bring you a hundred. I'll play it and divide with you if you say so."

I shook my head most decidedly and told him I would not bet on the races under any consideration.

"Oh, well, no doubt you're right. If you'll let the races alone you will not lose, anyway." His eagerness was gone, now, and the old hopeless inflection had come back into his voice and he fell to bewailing his luck. I began to see clearly why he could never get on in life. He was all wrapped up in "the ponies," and his pitiful effort to pick a winner was his one passion in life. He was all the time explaining how he failed to win today, and why he figured himself certain to win tomorrow. He had no energy left to advance in life.

"How is Slim Jim?" I asked, hoping to divert his mind.

"He's out on bail, and he's all in a sweat for fear you'll show up and prosecute him. He's been trying to find you, but I just told them I didn't know what had become of you."

"Oh, I wouldn't have you tell any stories on my account."

"H'm, I don't mind it. If I never do anything worse 'n that I'll be all right. But I'd advise you to be careful."

I promised to do that, for I was struggling every day with Searchlights and was not looking for further adventures. It seemed, though, that I was not to escape. The very next day I got into a serious difficulty in the most unexpected way.

My landlady, Mrs. Berg, was a grass widow, her husband having gone to Klondike to seek his fortune in the gold fields. Perhaps he had found it, and perhaps he had fallen a victim to the many dangers of that could country. At any rate Mrs. Berg had not heard from him again. She told me all about him the second day I was there, and because I was sympathetic, perhaps, she soon began to tell me of her other troubles—and she was fuller of troubles than a chimney is of smoke.

Her house rent was fifty dollars a month, and she found it very hard to pay. Darrell, my friend of the Wolf House, was two weeks behind with his board, and others were more or less delinquent, she said. She had bought her furniture on the installment plan and was two payments behind, now, with the merchants threatening to come and strip the house.

These troubles naturally worried her nearly to death, and her eyes were continually red from weeping. I consoled her whenever I could, but found it a relief to go to my own room and read, whenever I came home early.

One afternoon my quiet was disturbed by a most tremendous uproar downstairs, and I hurried out, thinking the place must be on fire.

Two men, whom I took at once for robbers, were in the hallway, and Hilda the hired girl had driven one of them into a corner and was pounding him over the head with a tin dish pan.

Mrs. Berg was shoving and "shooing" at the other fellow with the brushy end of the broom.

Every time Hilda hit the man's head with the vessel he yelled, and his cries for help could be heard above the clatter of the pan. His partner, evidently believing harsh measures were necessary, made a rush, upsetting Mrs. Berg as he went by, and seized Hilda by the throat and pushed her back against the wall.

It was a most brutal thing, and the half-strangled girl was waving her dishpan aimlessly above her head when I reached the bottom of the stair.

"Stop that, you villain," I cried as I made for him.

"No you don't," said his partner, a red-bearded fellow; stepping between us.

But I did not stop. I leaped for the whiskered one, and my clenched fist caught him under the chin.

Down he went, the weight of the running blow putting him out of the scrimmage for a moment.

Warned by his companion's cry the other fellow released his hold on Hilda's throat and faced me.

Before I could get my hands on him he had whipped out a pistol and fired it almost in my face. I could feel the heat of the burning powder and was almost blinded by the glare.

I knew, though, that he had missed me, and before he could fire again I caught the weapon by the muzzle and wrenched it out of his hand, the second discharge crashing through the transome above the hall door and shattering little bits of glass over the front steps.

The shots, the falling glass, and perhaps more than all the continued screaming of Mrs. Berg, soon brought a crowd to the door and Hilda opened it. A policeman came in, followed by two or three men. Then the door was quickly closed and locked to keep out the curious and excited mob that was still gathering.

The fellow I had struck—he of the bushy beard—was now sitting up and looking around in a dazed way. He clearly did not comprehend all that had happened.

The other man was holding up his hands. I had turned his own weapon upon him and was holding the muzzle against his breast.

"What's the trouble?" cried the policeman.

"Robbery," said I.

"Murder," screamed Mrs. Berg.

"Ay tank Ay get you this time, already," said Hilda, who had recovered her breath. She ran up to her enemy and smashed him over the head with the dishpan. It was an unfair blow, because he was my prisoner and had his hands up in token of surrender.

"Take her away, take her away," the fellow begged; "and then for mercy's sake disarm this crazy man. He'll shoot somebody first thing you know."

"Put the handcuffs on this bandit, Mr. Policeman," said I. "When you get him safe, I'll tell you all about it. He's already fired at me twice."

The distracted blue-coat did not know whom to believe in the tangle of tales, but he soon reduced us to order, taking the pistol from me and commanding Hilda to take the dish pan back in the kitchen.

"Now, somebody give me the straights [illegible] it," he commanded.

"This will go hard with somebody," broke in the red-bearded fellow, rising from the floor. He threw back his coat displaying a star: "Cook County Constable."

"Well, if it isn't Iceberg," exclaimed the policeman.

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"Are you a constable?" I asked

"It will go hard with somebody," he replied. "Here we come in due process of law to serve a paper and are set upon by these two women. Then this ruffian comes and assaults us. It's resistin' an officer, that's what it is."

"I didn't know you were an officer. Why didn't you say so?" I demanded. "When I hear screams for help and come down stairs and find you choking a woman to death, what am I going to do?"

"You're going to get yourself in trouble, that's what you are going to do," he declared. "I arrest you for resistin' an officer."

I fully expected to be hauled off to jail, but to my great surprise the policeman came to my rescue.

"It's just another one of your scrapes, Iceberg," he said, "and you happened to get the worst of it this time. Everybody knows how you mistreat women and children, and there's a big crowd outside now."

He went to the door and looked out, two or three fellows taking advantage of the fact to squeeze their way in.

"There's two or three hundred people out there, and I won't answer for the consequences if you undertakes to remove a prisoner from hese," said the policeman. "You're not very popular, you know. I'd advise you and your helper to take a sneak the back way."

Well, the constable "sneaked." He vowed vengeance against me, but seemed anxious enough to get away.

One of the last men that came in was a newspaper reporter. He showed his star to the policeman and inquired all about the affair.

"That'll make a fine story," he declared. "My paper is after these ruffian constables. I'll get on the first train with this."

He produce a camera and took snapshots of Mrs. Berg and Hilda, and then he clicked the instrument at me before I knew it.

I begged him to leave me out of it, but he laughed and said I was the hero of the whole affair.

I thought he was joking about that, but he was a nice fellow and I had quite a visit with him, but I did not dream that he was going to make "copy" out of me.

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Mrs. Flatleigh—How so?

Mrs. Suburbs—She had a policeman and a burglar call the same evening.

Cause and Effect.

The magazine editor had just accepted a poem.

"We pay when we publish," he said.

"That being the case," rejoined he of the unburthened hair, "it's up to me to dine when I can."

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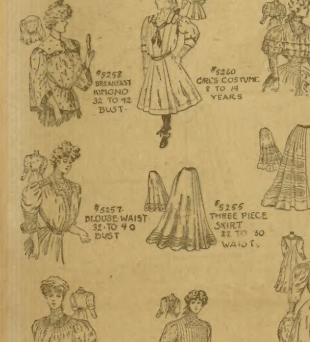

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Steam Engine and Sawing Attachment Complete Given for Disposing of Only 20 Articles at 10c. Each.

SOUVENIR POST CARD ALBUM

This beautiful Souvenir Post-Card Album is 9x12 inches, holding 200 Post Cards, handsomely bound, and has 40 leaves, all made of heavy cardboard, to hold post cards. Given free for disposing of only twenty articles at 10 cents each. Express charges prepaid.

Swiss Cuckoo Clock.

Calling Cuckoo clock, half and half tone. Given free for disposing of only twenty articles at 10 cents each. Express charges prepaid.

Boys' Baseball Catchers' Mitts and Mask complete, given free for disposing of only twenty articles at ten cents each. Express charges prepaid.

Boys' & Girls' Violin Outfit

This Violin Outfit, complete with violin, bow, case, etc., is given free for disposing of thirty articles at ten cents each. Express charges prepaid.

EXTENSION ROLLER SKATES for Boys and Girls

You can get a pair of Extension Roller Skates given free for disposing of only twenty articles at ten cents each, express charges prepaid.

ALL PREMIUMS SENT CHARGES PREPAID

HOW TO OBTAIN any of the above PREMIUMS, HANDSOME PREMIUMS write us for a box of our fancy and useful articles, such as Perfumes and Toilet Soaps, Jewelry, Novelties and Notions, etc., which you can sell to your friends and neighbors at only 10 cents each (cash in advance), and when sold return us the money collected, and we will promptly forward you your choice of premiums as above. WE TRUST YOU. NO MONEY WANTED UNTIL ARTICLES ARE SOLD.

ADDRESS ALL ORDERS TO THE

MAIL ORDER PREMIUM HOUSE,

400 Premium House Building, BRIDGEWATER, CONN.

CHINA TEA OR LUNCH SET.

Nine Pieces

Exquisite decoration in gold and flowers of a beautiful, full size, for ladies' use, given free for disposing of only 30 articles at 10c. each.

Express Charges Prepaid.

FREE DOLL

Given Absolutely FREE Without Money or Price

For Every Little Girl in the United States.

Dolly

Dimple

Nearly One and One-fourth ft. Tall.

Sent Free, Postage Paid.

This Big Art Rag Doll

DOLLY DIMPLE IS GIVEN ABSOLUTELY FREE

To every girl who answers this advertisement and orders a box of our useful and fast-selling ten-cent articles for another premium. Remember, this is no catch scheme, as the above doll will be sent out absolutely free with every box of articles ordered on consignment.

Our only conditions are, you must promise to try your very best to dispose of the articles at ten cents each for one of our handsome premiums shown in this advertisement, and if unsuccessful, you are to return the articles in good condition and keep Dolly Dimple, the Art Rag Doll, for your trouble.

Don't fail to state in your letter how many articles are wanted for a premium, as we may know how many articles to send you. Write plainly.

Simply send your name and address plainly written, and we will send you a box of articles postage paid, with a FREE RAG DOLL, Dolly Dimple, by mail, post paid.

Every little girl wants a doll that cannot be broken. Here is the doll that will stand the racket and absolutely free to you. Send for it and be happy.